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# LECTURES,

DELIVERED AT BOWDOIN COLLEGE,

AND

# OCCASIONAL SERMONS,

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BY JESSE APPLETON, D. D.

Late President of Bowdoin College.

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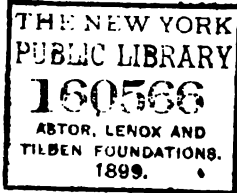
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JOHN MUSSEY, Jun. Clerk of the District Court, Maine.

JOHN WOOD  
TILDEN  
YEAH 1899

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**MEMOIR**  
**OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER**  
**OF**  
**PRESIDENT APPLETON.**

---

IN a sketch of the character of President Appleton, prefixed to his *Addresses*, there is a reference to the sermon, delivered at his interment,\* which "had already been published at the request of the Trustees and Overseers of Bowdoin College, and would shortly issue from the press in connexion with his theological works." It has not been thought best to insert in this volume the whole of that discourse. Extracts will be given from it, with some alterations and additions.

JESSE APPLETON was born November 17, 1772, at New Ipswich, New Hampshire. The genealogy of his father's family has been traced to John Appleton Esq. of Waldingfield in Suffolk (Eng.) who died in 1436. Samuel, a descendant from John, of the eighth generation, came to America in 1635. A grandson of Major Isaac Appleton, grandson to Samuel, was Francis, the father of the subject of this memoir. He was esteemed a truly excellent man, pious from early childhood, of vigorous intellect, and of a remarkably calm, sober disposition. He died in January 1816, aged 83. A brother of Francis was a clergyman, of some distinction, in Brookfield, Mass.

\* Rev. Benjamin Tappan of Augusta, author of this Memoir.



It does not appear, that the early years of President Appleton were distinguished by any striking indications of intellectual excellence. He was much beloved, as an "amiable, pleasant" youth; but the impression was not received by those around him, that he possessed extraordinary powers, or was destined to future eminence.

He became a member of Dartmouth College in 1788. While at that Institution, he was "diligent in his studies, amiable in his manners, and blameless in his deportment." The year before he entered College, the attention of the students had been directed, in an unusual degree, to their spiritual interests; and the effects were still apparent in the solemnity and zeal, evinced at their religious meetings. The mind of Appleton, already by parental counsels and example, imbued with a respect for christianity was now more deeply affected by its truths and obligations. At what time he was made a subject of renewing grace, is a question, respecting which it is believed, he was not himself decided. He was not, indeed, accustomed, at any period of life, to be very confident of his own piety. The only evidence, on which he thought it safe to rely, was derived from "the perception in himself of those qualities, which the Gospel requires;" and when he compared his own attainments with the high demands of the Gospel, he could not readily convince himself, that he had "passed from death unto life."

On leaving College, he spent two years in the instruction of youth at Dover and Amherst. His situation, during this period, was not peculiarly favorable to spiritual improvement; and, though he was deservedly much esteemed by his pupils and associates, yet there was a want of constant devotion to God and religion, on which he afterwards reflected with deep regret.

Having completed a preparatory course of theological study under the direction of the late venerable Dr. Lathrop, of West Springfield, he began to preach in the summer of 1795; and such was the opinion, then entertained of his talents and piety, that some clergymen in Massachusetts, who did not consider him, as according fully in sentiment with themselves, strongly recommended him to certain vacant parishes, as a candidate for settlement. After preaching about two years as a candidate, he was

invited to preach in the town of Hampton N. H. where in February, 1797, he was ordained to the pastoral care of a church and parish.

In this new and important situation, he proved a *workman that needeth not to be ashamed*. Much of his time was devoted to study: to study, not in name, but in reality. For "he had that first requisite of all true and durable greatness, the habit of patient, long continued attention." Nor was his industry rendered fruitless by the want of system. He knew the advantages of method, and he conscientiously availed himself of them. There was an order, a regularity in his various pursuits, that beautifully corresponded with the stricture of his mind, and the symmetry of his character. As the result of his inquiries he adopted religious opinions, differing considerably from those, which he at first entertained. At the time of his settlement his views were in accordance with the system of Armenius. Those, which he afterwards cherished, the attentive reader will find developed in this volume. The change was not hastily made, nor was it owing to any undue influence of the opinions of others. "For authorities without proofs he had but little reverence." He thought for himself and sought after truth with the most careful, laborious research; always accompanied, as there is good reason to believe, with fervent prayer for Divine illumination.

His sermons, though free from all elaborate display of learning, were written with uncommon care and accuracy. Established in a country village, he found it necessary, if he would be understood, to use *great plainness of speech*. Superior to a foolish pedantry, and solicitous to be useful, he uniformly studied simplicity and perspicuity of expression. But his simplicity never degenerated into vulgarity. At an early period of his ministry, his discourses were distinguished by richness of sentiment, by strength and purity of style. It was his practice to write but one sermon a week, and to finish that before Saturday.

He was very attentive to his people, visited them often, and "always, as a minister." Frequently when visiting his parishioners, and when visited by them, he spent a portion of the time, in reading some religious book; such as Doddridge's *Rise and Progress*.

It does not appear, that his ministry was uncommonly successful. *The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.* That he felt very deeply the importance of the trust committed to him, and assiduously and ably performed its duties, was doubted by no one that knew him. In all his intercourse with his people he was prudent, faithful and affectionate. Whether he ministered in the sanctuary, or taught *from house to house*, or dispensed instruction to children (a service, in which he peculiarly delighted) or conversed and prayed with the sick and afflicted, they were convinced, that he loved them, and earnestly desired their temporal and eternal welfare. They were not wanting in affection to him. Of this they gave abundant proof, while he dwelt among them; and after his removal, when he visited the place, they gathered round him, like children round a father. His coming occasioned universal joy: and they wept at every new parting. It has been said, that some of them were scarcely able to speak of him without tears.

He was much beloved by his brethren in the ministry; and was active in every effort to promote ministerial fidelity and improvement. At his suggestion, several clergymen in the vicinity were accustomed, quarterly to meet at each other's houses, for the purposes, of private fasting and prayer, and of free conversation upon theological inquiries and official duties. At his suggestion also, a periodical work was published, entitled the *Piscataqua Evangelical Magazine*, to which he contributed several valuable essays, under the signature of Leighton.

He was regarded with peculiar respect by all the churches and congregations in the neighborhood: and, though at the time of his settlement, and during the continuance of his ministry, there was much unhappy division and animosity between the two societies then existing in Hampton, yet in view of both parties Mr. Appleton was constantly rising in estimation.

It has been remarked by one, who was with him on several ecclesiastical councils, and on some occasions, when the cases, under deliberation, were unusually difficult, that "his discernment, discretion, and decision were always conspicuous." By these qualities, indeed, he was uniformly distinguished. A superficial observer might not always have thought him very quick of ap-

prebension. For he neither expressed, nor formed an opinion rashly. He knew that the human understanding is of limited capacity, and is liable to err. He reflected, he examined, before he came to a conclusion; but having decided, he seldom found occasion (at least in the later years of life) to alter his opinions.—As he judged correctly, so he acted wisely. Both in public and private life, he conducted with consummate prudence; a virtue, not always found connected, either with genius, or piety. But the sentinel *at the door of his lips* was always at his post. He never ceased to *ponder the path of his feet*, nor could it ever be said of him, that *there was no judgment in his goings*. Yet his feelings were ardent, his spirit was resolute and commanding. He united caution with firmness, and zeal with discretion.

In the year 1800 he was married to Miss Elizabeth Means, daughter of Hon. Robert Means of Amherst N. H. In her he found a friend, worthy of the connexion, which, for nearly twenty years, so happily subsisted between them. They had six children; three sons, and three daughters. The youngest child, a son, was very suddenly taken from them, when three years old, in October, 1817. The other five children are still living.

That Mr. Appleton stood high in public estimation, was made evident in 1803, by his being selected, as one of the two principal candidates for the professorship of theology in the University at Cambridge. A few years after he received both from Harvard and Dartmouth the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Upon the death of Dr. McKeen, the first President of Bowdoin College, Dr. Appleton was chosen his successor. After much serious deliberation, he accepted the appointment, and was inaugurated in November, 1807.

For the office of presiding over a Literary Institution, he was admirably qualified. In his character was united the spirit of command with those qualities that conciliate; and he was sure to gain the affection and respect, both of the students, and of his associates in the government. The responsibility, attached to his high station, he deeply and constantly felt; and with singular firmness, discretion, diligence, and success, he performed its du-

ties. With wisdom did he conduct himself in perplexing circumstances; and when at any time his measures were misunderstood, and his fidelity was requited with resentment and reproach, he exhibited a genuine magnanimity. He was never indeed, unmindful, that the beings, placed under his care, were endued with reason, and he did not wish to govern them by mere authority and power. Whenever he rejected their petitions, he sought at the same time to convince them, that it would be wrong to do otherwise; to their complaints and remonstrances they always found him willing to attend; and, if they could not prevail to alter his determinations, it was because he had proceeded with deliberation and sound judgment in forming them. He expected, from the first, to meet with difficulties. But, "O, my God," his prayer was, "enable me to act uprightly, prudently, uniformly, resolutely, and with love to thee: Then, let come of it what will, by thy grace, I will endure it all"\* The prayer was answered; and the resolution, connected with it, was accomplished. Like the glorious sun in the heavens, he swerved not from his course; and, if the mists of passion and prejudice ever obscured his brightness, they were soon dissipated, and he shone forth with new and augmented splendor.

The interest, which he felt in the prosperity of the institution, could not be exceeded. It was a solicitude, that never slumbered. Toward those, who successively became its members, he possessed and manifested the feelings of a father. In administering reproof he was unrivaled. There was such a solemnity in his manner, and pungency in his rebukes; the guilt, baseness, and ill consequences of vicious conduct were so plainly and forcibly represented, that the delinquent must have been hardened indeed, if his mind were not overwhelmed with shame and remorse. It is known, that in many instances the effects of his admonitions were salutary and permanent.

As an instructor, President Appleton was most attentive and assiduous. Though it formed no part of his official duties, he prepared and delivered, for the benefit of the students, upwards of fifty theological lectures, in which he treated of the being, attributes and providence of God, the necessity of a revelation, the

\* Extracted from a little MS. containing pious thoughts and meditations.

evidences, and several of the more important doctrines, of christianity. To the composition of these lectures he devoted much time, thought, and study. Truth is exhibited in them with great clearness of illustration, cogency of argument, and frequently, when the subject would admit, with very powerful application to the conscience and heart.

The benefits, resulting from his Presidency, as well to the community, as to the College, it is not easy to appreciate. To his wisdom and fidelity must be attributed, in no small degree, the high rank of Bowdoin College among the literary institutions of our country. The deep interest, which he felt in the temporal and eternal welfare of the students, and the happy tendency of his instructions to promote it, were exhibited, in the most impressive manner, at the annual Commencements. One could not witness on these occasions his dignified, graceful demeanor; nor listen to his prayers, so pertinent, solemn, and fervent; to his addresses, so full of sentiment, eloquence, and feeling, without strong emotions of admiration and delight.

Those habits of intense application, which he had formed, while the minister of a small country parish, it was not to be expected, that he would relinquish, when placed at the head of one of our first seminaries of learning. He still continued to be "a close and uniform student." He was much adduced to philological researches; more especially in reference to our own language. The principles of grammar, the laws of pure, classical composition, and of correct pronunciation, were subjects of his exact and critical attention. It has been said, that "he excelled in ethical inquiries;" and it may be added, that he was well versed in metaphysical disquisitions. It was one effect of his acquaintance with subjects of this nature, that on certain points, in regard to which others have imagined, that they saw clearly, and were authorized to speak positively, he was far more cautious and doubtful. He knew so much about them, as to know, how little can be known.

Theology was ever his favorite study: and not without reason was he accounted one of the first divines in New England. He was far from indulging the spirit of controversy; but he loved to agitate important subjects, and his mind was richly furnish-

ed for such discussion. "No man," said a distinguished divine of the Hopkinsian school,\* "knows better, how to ask a question, than Mr. Appleton." It is believed, that others not unskilled in theological science, have had occasion to feel the correctness of such an observation.

The services of President Appleton in the pulpit were universally, and in a high degree, interesting. In the best sense of the expression, he was more, than most others, a rational preacher. His ideas were exhibited with great clearness, and in a manner peculiarly convincing. If the important truths, which he uttered, did not always reach the hearts of his hearers, yet, like the great apostle of the Gentiles, he *commended himself to every man's conscience*. It was difficult for those who heard him, not to feel, that they were accountable beings; that their Creator had a perfect right to their love and obedience; that by their transgressions they had incurred His just displeasure; and that it must needs be *a fearful thing to fall into His hands*. Religion appeared most evidently *a reasonable service*; and the sinner often found himself convicted, at the bar of his own mind, of the most egregious folly. He portrayed the scenes of futurity, as one who knew and felt them to be real; and who earnestly desired to produce in the minds of others a conviction, deep and influential, as his own, of the value of the soul, and the certainty of eternal retributions.—His eloquence was his own. It was such, as became "a legate of the skies." There were no tricks of oratory. But there was the eloquence of truth, of reason, and of feeling. His manner of writing was distinguished by strength and energy; his manner of speaking, and I may add, his very looks, were singularly solemn and impressive. On hearing him preach, and, if possible, still more, on hearing him pray, one naturally thought of applying the epithet *apostolic*.

That his public services were very highly valued, was made sufficiently evident by the frequency, with which they were solicited. Within a few years, he was invited to preach, not only before the Bible, Missionary, Education, and Peace Societies, of Maine, and, on more occasions than one, at meetings of citizens, associated to suppress immoralities, and to promote the better observance of the Sabbath; but also before the American

\* The Rev. Dr. Spring of Newburyport.

Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, of which he was a member; before the Legislature, at the annual election; and the same year, before the Convention of the Congregational Clergy; before the Massachusetts Society for the suppression of Intemperance; and had his health permitted, he would in the year on which he died, have addressed the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge. His discourses, on several of these occasions, are already before the public.

Those, who were not particularly acquainted with President Appleton, might, in some instances, infer from the reserve and gravity, which they witnessed, that he did not relish society. Such an inference would be erroneous. Of the pleasure, found in social intercourse, he was peculiarly susceptible. To his friends he uniformly gave a most cordial reception; and discovered a strong and generous attachment. His dwelling was the abode of hospitality. His politeness and courtesy were "not the substitute, but the expression of real kindness." He had an uncommonly nice sense of propriety in conduct; and treated, with the utmost delicacy, the opinions and feelings of those, with whom he was conversant. He was scrupulously observant of truth; especially in reference to the sentiments, words, and actions of others; and often lamented the prevalence, particularly in the religious world, of misrepresentation and slander. He was not disposed to look, through a magnifying medium, at the errors, or the sins, of his fellow-men. There were those, whom he viewed, as embracing unscriptural and pernicious sentiments; but he was not fond of opposing them by positive assertions, or harsh epithets. He believed that men are accountable to God for their religious opinions; but he did not wish to see the establishment of ecclesiastical tribunals; and was jealous of any encroachment upon freedom of inquiry.

President Appleton was, in truth, a man of *an excellent spirit*. The more intimately you knew him, the more plainly you perceived, that he possessed real humility, meekness, and candor. *The law of christian kindness was in his lips*, and the spirit of christian benevolence governed his conduct. Nor were his virtues of doubtful origin. They were plainly the fruits of vital piety. God had written His law upon his heart, and had put



His fear and love within him. In the perfect character, in the righteous government, of Jehovah, he had strong confidence; in every event he acknowledged His hand; and in conformity to His will sought to regulate his actions, words, and thoughts. His sense of religious obligation was strong and constant; he appeared to live, *as seeing Him who is invisible*. He was eminently a man of prayer. His devotions in the family, in the College chapel, and in the sanctuary, were those of one, who lived near to God; and his habitual deportment evinced that he cultivated, with uncommon assiduity, an intercourse with heaven. If there are those, who make their prayers a substitute for the discharge of moral duties, it was not so with him. There was in him, in constant, vigorous exercise, a genuine principle of integrity; and he aimed at universal rectitude of feeling and of practice. Hence in every relation and circumstance, he exhibited, with singular uniformity, the christian temper and deportment. His domestic character was a lovely exhibition of Christianity. He was the last man, of whom it could be said, that, although apparently a christian abroad, he was negligent of duty, and the slave of bad passions, at home. Toward all around him there was an unintermitting flow of the sincerest good will and kindness; at times, he indulged in sallies of wit and humor. In the government of his children he happily united affection with authority. He did not allow them in sin; he did not permit them to be disobedient; but his control was that of a father and a friend. He interested himself in their pursuits and pleasures; amidst the cares and avocations of an arduous station, he found leisure to superintend their studies, and, by frequently conversing and praying with them, to seek their salvation.

As President of a College Dr. Appleton manifested to a high degree the influence of a christian spirit. Punctual and diligent in performing the common duties of his office, he sought, with untiring assiduity, the literary improvement of the students; but, with a still more fervent zeal, he sought their eternal welfare. Of this they could not but be convinced: and such an influence was given to the truths, duties, and sanctions of religion by his character, instructions, and prayers, as to occasion the remark, "It is impossible to go through Bowdoin College without receiv-

ing serious impressions."—He ever rejoiced, when the students made proficiency in science; but as for himself,\* so also for them, it was the great object of his wishes, that they might know God their Maker, and Jesus Christ their Redeemer. Many a sleepless night did he pass, on hearing, that any of them were vicious; and often was his soul *cast down, and disquieted within him*, on observing little or no evidence of vital piety among them. But when the character of the students, in this respect, was changed, and some of them were thought truly pious, "it is," said he, "a great and glorious thing. It is what we have long been praying for. The mercy of the Lord toward us has been unutterable. Praise, everlasting praise, be rendered to His name."

His benevolence was not confined within narrow limits. He loved his country, and his species. He earnestly desired the universal diffusion of christian truth and virtue. Whatever menaced evil to the church of Christ, he viewed with alarm; whatever appeared conducive to its extension and prosperity, he hailed with delight. He considered it a peculiar favor, that he lived in so glorious an age, and was permitted to witness events, so auspicious to the best interests of mankind. Exertions for the distribution of the scriptures, for evangelizing the heathen, for educating pious young men for the Gospel Ministry, for promoting the principles and spirit of peace, for preventing and suppressing vice, he beheld with lively interest, with devout thankfulness and joy; and as opportunity presented, was ever ready to aid them, by his counsels, charities, and labors.

The life of such a man, in such a station, might well be considered peculiarly valuable. But *my ways, saith the Lord, are not your ways, neither are my thoughts your thoughts.*

About the time of his losing a very dear child, October 1817, he took a severe cold; and although he was enabled, for many months to attend to his customary duties, he did not, at any time afterward, enjoy his usual health. In the month of May 1819, he became more indisposed; and was not able to officiate at the

\* "One week of tender, lively, and prayerful views of God, Christ, and the gospel, is better, than years of intellectual research, that has no near connexion with Jesus and his religion. Oh God, make me spiritual."

*From the MS. before referred to.*

College exhibition. His complaints were a slight cough, great hoarseness, and debility. It was thought a journey would prove serviceable. He left home, on the 20th of May, travelled as far as Amherst, (N. H.) and returned in about a month, not essentially benefited. About the middle of July, a voyage to Boston was contemplated. But, the design being relinquished, he remained with his family. About the last of September, or the first of the month following, he seemed to be gaining a little strength; and the hope was entertained, at least by some of his friends, that he might yet be restored. But on the 12th of October, a profuse hemorrhage taking place, all hope of his recovery was, from that time, abandoned.

It was mercifully ordered, that his illness should not be attended with severe pain; and that, until the last few days of his life, he should be in the perfect possession of his understanding. During that long and trying period of feebleness and apprehension, which preceded his dissolution, his christian graces appeared unusually clear and bright; he enjoyed in a greater degree, than in health, the consolations and hopes of the gospel, and ripened rapidly for glory. Peculiarly apparent were his humility and deep sense of unworthiness. "Of this," he often said, "I am sure, that salvation is all of grace." "I would make no mention of any thing, which I have ever thought, or said, or done; but only of this, that God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. The atonement is the only ground of hope." To a friend, that desired to know the state of his mind, he gave the following account. "In general, I am quite comfortable; but not uniformly, though I have seldom what may be called distress, or great anxiety. I have sometimes sweet views of God's holy providence. But I am, indeed, a poor sinner, lying at the foot of sovereign mercy. Most emphatically, and from my soul, do I renounce all hope, in any thing done by myself, as a ground of justification. I fly, I fly with my whole soul, to the blood of a crucified Saviour." A devout and thankful frame of mind was very conspicuous. He frequently spake of the goodness of God in ordering the various circumstances of his sickness; and uniformly mentioned every comfort, as a mercy from his hand. The latter part of the time, until his mind was disorder-

ed, he was accustomed, on receiving his medicines, or any portion however small, of any liquid, to ejaculate a petition for the divine blessing. From his clear and impressive views of the perfections of Deity, and full confidence in the rectitude of His dispensations, proceeded a cordial submission to the divine will. He felt that he had ties, as numerous, and as strong, to this world, as most men. "I am not," he remarked, in a letter to the author of this memoir, dated July 1st, "indifferent to life. How can I be, with such a family, as I have ; so young, and so dependent on parental attention and guidance ? But the event is with God ; and I hope, that I am willing it should be so. I am not very anxious as to the event. I hope it is my desire, that Christ may be honored, whether by my life or death." In another letter written about a fortnight afterward, having mentioned some particulars, relative to his disorder, he thus proceeds. "You see, my dear sir, that my prospects do not brighten, as to returning health. But God is holy, wise, and good. I am in his hands. What can I wish more ? Jesus Christ has said, He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live. Blessed words ! and blessed Saviour !" In an interview with a ministerial friend, after he began to consider his disease, as likely to prove fatal, on being asked, if he could submissively leave his family with God, he replied, "I have been the happiest man in the world in my domestic connexions : I have endeavoured faithfully to instruct my children, and they have conducted, so as greatly to endear themselves to me. I shall leave them but little property, but they will be in the hands of Him, who made them. God has been uniformly good to me all my life, and it would now be *very unreasonable* for me to be unwilling to obey His summons." At a subsequent visit, the same friend having inquired what had been the state of his mind, since he last saw him, "I have had lately," he said, "such views of God's character, as have made me feel *very comfortable, very comfortable*. But last night, after throwing up blood, I was somewhat discomposed, and found I could do nothing, but lie at the feet of a sovereign God." From the window of his chamber he frequently looked at the College buildings. One day, while fixing his eye upon them, he exclaimed, "Precious objects have ye

been to me ; but I resign you all for my God." He often said, " God will do right ; all is well. In health, he had been prone to indulge anxiety, and sometimes to a high degree in regard to the institution, over which he presided. But during his sickness, this solicitude gave place to a firm reliance on God's gracious protection. "*God has taken care of the College,*" he would say, "*and God will take care of it.*"

In such a state of mind, as the facts that have been mentioned, indicate, he could not but feel happy ; nor could he fail to cherish the hope of a blissful immortality. Throughout his illness, he was, almost uniformly, free from distressing fears ; and as death drew nigh, his hope ripened into assurance. Of what nature was the felicity, that he anticipated, may be learned from the following circumstances. The inquiry was made, if he did not find something pleasant in the thought, that the happiness of heaven would never end. "Connect with it," he replied, "the thought of perfect holiness, and it is a glorious thought indeed." At another time, after exclaiming, "Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain, to receive glory, and honor, and riches, and blessing," he added, "there is joy in that song !"

About a week before his death, there was a return of hemorrhage. It occasioned extreme distress. It was feared by others, and by himself, that suffocation would take place. As the family stood around him, looking for the moment, when he would expire, he suddenly obtained relief ; and his first words were, uttered in his own emphatic manner, "*Good and upright is the Lord.*" The day after, he called his children to him, and, with perfect composure, gave to each of them, separately, what he considered his dying counsel. He was apprehensive that the bleeding would return, and that he should not be able to survive it. Towards night, he requested to be raised a little in his bed, that he might see the setting sun. Having beheld it for a moment, he said, as he reclined his head upon the pillow, "Before it dawns again, I shall be in glory." This expectation was not realized, for he was continued a week longer. During the greater part of the last five days, his mind was somewhat disordered, and his thoughts were wandering. At times he appeared perfectly rational, and uttered many interesting expressions.

"I do not wish," he remarked one day, "that much should be said of me. This I think they may say, that I am a poor sinner, saved by Jesus Christ. But they need not put much to it." The last day he was evidently much in prayer. With his petitions praises were mingled. "Glory to God in the highest; the whole earth shall be filled with his glory." At length, after a long and painful struggle with the last enemy, about eight in the evening, on the 12th of Nov. 1819, he fell asleep in Jesus.

*The following is the inscription on his tomb stone.*

Huic tumulo mandantur reliquiæ  
REV. JESSE APPLETON, S. T. D.

MARITI DESIDERATISSIMI, PATRIS OPTIMI,  
ALMÆQUE NOSTRÆ ACADEMIÆ SECUNDI PRÆSIDIS.

—ooo—

Vir fuit ingenii acumine insignis, moribus  
compositis, ac aspectu benigno  
majestatem quandam præ se ferente :  
sed morti inexorabili nihil est sanctum.

Eruditione magna,  
inter literatorum principes justissime collocandus :  
at Theologicæ scientiæ lauream præcipue meritus ;  
hac enim, quo homines audeant,  
cognovit et tentavit.

Integra fide, disciplinaque salutari,  
duodecim annos,  
res Academicas administravit.

Nimis tandem vigiliis laboribusque consumptus,  
sublimi ejus animo supernis intento,  
ad quietem se contulit.

Ita vixit, ut omnes moribundi, sic se vixisse,  
vellint; ita mortuus est,

ut omnes, sic se morituros esse, optarent :  
tamen voluit inscribi, *se salutem sperasse in Jesu.*

Natus est Novem<sup>is</sup> die 17<sup>mo</sup> Anno Domini MDCCLXXII.  
Obiitque Novem<sup>is</sup> die 12<sup>mo</sup> Anno Domini MDCCCXIX.

Senatus Academiæ Bowdoinensis  
summa reverentia,  
hoc monumentum posuerunt.

The following is a list of publications which have proceeded from his pen.

1. Dedication Sermon at Hampton, N. H. . . . . 1797
2. Sermon at the ordination of Rev. Asa Rand, of Gorham . . . . 1809
3. ——— of Rev. Jonathan Cogswell, of Saco . . . . 1810
4. ——— of Rev. Reuben Nason, of Freeport . . . . 1810
5. ——— of Rev. Benjamin Tappan, of Augusta . . . . 1811
6. Discourse on the death of Frederic Southgate . . . . 1813
7. Massachusetts Election Sermon . . . . . 1814
8. Sermon delivered at Brunswick, on the day of a national Thanksgiving 1815
9. Sermon before the society of Bath and vicinity for the suppression of public vices . . . . . 1816
10. Sermon at the ordination of Rev. Enos Merrill of Freeport . . . . 1816
11. Address before the Massachusetts Society for the suppression of intemperance . . . . . 1816
12. Sermon before the Cumberland Society for the suppression of public vices . . . . . 1816
13. Sermon before the American Board of commissioners for Foreign Missions . . . . . 1817
14. Sermon at the formation of the Maine Education Society . . . . 1818
15. Addresses delivered at the annual commencements from 1808 to 1818, 8vo. Brunswick, 1820.

Note.—The Theological Lectures and Sermons, contained in this volume, were selected by Dr. Appleton himself, during his last sickness, and were committed for posthumous publication to the care of certain friends. Though it is much to be regretted, that they were not prepared for the press by his own hand, it may be confidently predicted, that they will not be found unworthy of the reputation of the author.

# LECTURE I.

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## *Necessity of Revelation.*

person, opening the New Testament for the first time, be insensible how much he was interested to ascertain its claims. He would perceive immediately, that the facts, of which it treats, have relation to the eternal destiny of man. He would perceive, that, if the writers of this were not what they pretended, no language can express the boldness of their impiety; and that, if they were, their publications become insignificant, when compared with their writings.

To exhibit a general view of the evidence, which supports Christianity, will be attempted in following lectures. As a reason for which, several will be employed in considering this question, whether the state of mankind were such as to render necessary any light, in addition to that, which is reflected by the works and providence of God.

Man are indeed extremely unqualified to determine *a priori*, what measures would, under given circumstances, comport with divine wisdom and benevolence. Many parts of God's administration are evidently different from what, with our limited views, we should have expected. It would be preposterous then to determine, with confidence, how much the wisdom of God would incline him to impart, or what state of things would demand his interposition. Yet the probability of a revelation, on supposition, that mankind



without it, generally entertained correct views of religious truth, would be considerably less, than if it should be found, on inquiry, that gross ignorance on the subject had generally prevailed in the world.

As all religion is founded on our relation to a supreme intelligent Being, it is proper to begin our inquiry concerning the necessity of revelation, by considering what opinions as to the divine nature, have prevailed among heathen, whether ancient or modern.

That ancient nations worshipped a multiplicity of gods, is a proposition, which requires no proof to any one, in the slightest degree, acquainted with the Greek and Roman historians and poets.\* So early, as the time of Hesiod, there were reckoned thirty thousand gods, inhabiting the earth, who were subjects of Jupiter, and guardians of men.† Those Deities were to be considered, as in a sense domesticated in Greece. In addition to these, Abp. Potter informs us, that there was a custom, which obliged them to entertain a great many strange gods.‡

The religion of the Greeks was probably derived from Phœnicia, Egypt, and Thrace, and was transmitted to the Romans.§

In our inquiry as to the necessity of revelation, it may be convenient to consider, what views of the Deity were entertained by those, whose superior application and wisdom procured for them the distinction of philosophers. But, as these were comprised in a very small number, when compared with the whole mass of the pagan world, their opinions, even were they less discordant than they are, would by no means enable us to ascertain the popular belief. The opinion of a few wise and studious men was one thing; and that of the great mass of the community, another. To obtain the latter, I know not, that any method can be more effectual, than to consult the writings of poets and historians. The writings of philosophers may indeed contribute, in no inconsiderable degree, to the same object: not

\* Priestley's lectures on Jew. Rel. 63.

† Hesiod. Oper. and Dies. L. I. 250.

‡ Gr. Antiq. I. 302.

§ Cudw. Int. Syst. I. 187.

because the opinions, which they entertained, indicate those of the vulgar; but because their practice was much influenced by the prevailing sentiment, which seems to have been occasionally animadverted upon in their writings.

The testimony of historians will, I suppose, be thought liable to no exception. For surely there can be no reason, why their testimony in regard to religion, should not be as readily taken, as when it relates to natural history, forms of government, or military operations. On the testimony of poets, it may be thought, that less reliance can be placed.

It is not indeed necessary to conclude, that the ancient poets always believed what they wrote concerning the gods. But, that they both designed and expected, that others should believe it, I think, there can be little doubt. To give pleasure, is allowed to be the grand aim of poetry. Extensively to accomplish this end, it must contain nothing, offensive to the prevailing opinion. A poet, who writes fiction, is careful to construct his fable in such manner, as shall not be abhorrent from the feelings and temper of his readers. Milton, in his "Paradise Lost," uses much fiction. But, had this been of such a kind, as to disgrace and belie the Christian religion, would his admirable poem have acquired popularity in a Christian nation? Ancient poets had not less sagacity, than those of later times. Would the poets of Greece and Italy have agreed, almost without an exception, in such representation of religion and the gods, as was generally disbelieved; and which, if believed, must have appeared, as it really was, a disgrace to human reason, and blasphemous to the Supreme Being?

I cannot represent this matter more clearly, than in the words of the learned Mr. Farmer.

"The accounts, given of the heathen gods, by the poets, did in fact constitute both the popular and civil theology; or the religion, received by the people, and established by the laws.\*

\*Worship of Hum. Spir. 292. for which he quotes Aug. Civ. Dei L. I. c. 132. Dio Chrys. Dion. Hal. Cic. de nat. Deor. 2. 24.

"The people, continues he, were more disposed to adopt the doctrine of the poets, than any physical interpretations; and regarded their writings, as the rule both of their faith and worship. Even the most absurd fables were understood literally, and received by the people, with implicit faith, in Greece, as well as in other countries.

"With regard to epic and dramatic poets, they cannot, without great impropriety, deviate from the customs of the ages, of which they write; the merit of their writings consisting very much in their being accurate representations of life and manners. Whenever, therefore, the poets, of whom we are now speaking, use the liberty of embellishment, their very fictions must be conformable to the received standard of the public religion."

Agreeable to this are the words of the profound Dr. Cudworth; "We cannot," says he, "make a better judgment concerning the generality and bulk of the ancient pagans, than from the poets and mythologists, who were the chief instructors of them."\*

There is a remarkable passage in *Plato's Timæus*, as quoted by Dr. Leland. "The poet cannot sing," says the Greek philosopher, "except he be full of God, and carried out of himself. They do not say these things by art, but by a divine power. God uses them, as his ministers, as he does the deliverers of oracles, and divine prophets, that we, hearing them, might know, that it is not they themselves, who speak those excellent things, since they have not then the use of their understanding, and that it is God, who speaks by them." Socrates is represented by Plato, as conversing to the same effect.

What higher authority could language express? If the assertions, here made, had been true, the assent given by the ancient heathen to poetical representations, ought not to have been less than that, which Christians yield to the sacred scriptures. And it must be considered, that this is not

\*You may imagine, says Lord Bacon what kind of faith theirs was, when the chief fathers and doctors of the church were the poets. Vol. I. 449.

the language of the illiterate vulgar, but of two among the wisest and best men of the heathen world. If men of such character attribute to the ancient bards a real inspiration, it can hardly be doubted, that the credulous multitude would receive poetical rhapsodies, as the standard of theological truth. It is just therefore, to form our opinion of the religious sentiments, which prevailed among the heathen, by the works of their most admired poems.

The multiplicity of heathen gods has already been mentioned, on the authority of Hesiod. The same theology was taught by Homer among the Greeks; by Virgil and Horace among the Latins; and, in general, by the poets of both nations.

So far there is no doubt. But in what light these numerous deities were considered, is in some degree less obvious. Dr. Cudworth has employed his extraordinary talents to prove, that, notwithstanding the objects of pagan worship were so numerous, the unity of God was still maintained. He supposes the ancient pagans to have thought, that there was one Supreme Deity, from whom all the rest proceeded, and on whom they were dependent. The dependence of these deities, he does not consider, as being in popular estimation, inconsistent with their eternity; as the Supreme God was supposed not only to have possessed, but, from eternity, to have exerted the power of producing others. He makes numerous quotations to prove, that this distinction was maintained both among philosophers and poets.

To this it may be answered, that though it is perfectly clear, that the poets denominated Jupiter, *almighty, the king and father of gods and men*; yet, as these deities were made the objects of distinct worship, and were considered as sovereign, each in his own dominions, and all as possessing moral characters, not essentially different, it is not very important, so far as human feelings and conduct are concerned, whether these numerous gods held their existence by the power of Jove, or independently of such power. Whatever supremacy was enjoyed by Jupiter in heaven, it

was Neptune, that governed the ocean; it was Pluto, that presided over the realms of death. And though it is true, that Homer, Virgil, and Horace, occasionally speak of Jupiter in terms, the most sublime and majestic, it is not less true, that on other occasions, their language is exceedingly different. The same father of gods and men, who is represented as grasping the thunder, and as governing the world's destiny, is acknowledged to have been once a Cretan boy. The dangers of his infancy are recorded; the savage temper and the jealousy of his father; the expedients, used by his mother, for his preservation; the manner, in which he was nourished in his youth; the insurrection, which he made against paternal authority, and the rebellion, which was commenced against his own; the number of wives, which he married, and the family, which he reared.

The same Homer, who speaks of Jupiter, in language of such peculiar sublimity; as of him, who rules both gods and men, mentions his being in danger from a combination of Juno, Neptune, and Pallas, who had conspired to bind him in fetters; and that Thetis delivered him, and averted the danger, by calling in Briareus to his assistance.

Hesiod applies to Jupiter epithets, not less magnificent, than those, which are used by Homer. Notwithstanding this, he informs us, that Jupiter was born of *Saturn* and *Rhea*; that *Pluto* and *Neptune* were his brothers; and that *Vesta*, *Ceres*, and *Juno*, were his sisters.

The language, in which Jupiter is mentioned by Virgil, seems to have been copied from Homer. He represents *Venus*, as addressing him thus, "O thou, who, by thine eternal sovereignty, governest the affairs of gods and men."† Yet in other parts of the poem, we behold Jupiter with no ensigns of eternal majesty, and not only under the influence of mortal passions, but perplexed by human embarrassments. He has a sister and daughter, importuning him to opposite measures; neither of whom can be gratified, but at the expense of the other.

\* Hom. *Illad.* l. 397.

† *Æn.* l. 229

Horace has been justly admired for the grandeur of his language, when celebrating the praises of Jupiter.‡

"Claims not the eternal Sire his wonted praise?

Awful, who reigns o'er gods and men supreme,

Who sea and earth, this universal globe,

With grateful change of seasons guides;

From whom no being of superior power,

Nothing of equal, second glory, springs."

*Francis.*

In the forth Ode of the *third* book, there is a passage, strikingly adapted to our present purpose. Speaking of Jupiter,

O'er gods and mortals, o'er the dreary plains,

And shadowy ghosts supremely just he reigns.

But, dreadful in his wrath, to hell pursued

With thunders headlong rage, the fierce Titanian brood;

Whose horrid youth, elate with impious pride,

Unnumbered, on their sinewy force relied;

Mountain on mountain piled they rais'd in air,

And shook the throne of Jove, and made the thunderer fear."

*Francis.*

Here, you perceive, that this Jupiter, to whom the poet ascribes omnipotence, is thrown into consternation by an insurrection among his subalterns.

From these quotations it may be judged, whether, if the ancient pagans held opinions in religion, conformable to the doctrine of the poets, they could have entertained any just views of the divine supremacy and independence.

It has been further said, that the various heathen deities were nothing but names, or notions of the Supreme God, according to his various powers and manifestations; it being thought fit, that those different glories and perfections of the Deity should not be crowded together in one general acknowledgment of an invisible being, the maker of the world: but that each of these perfections should be severally and distinctly displayed.

Now if this representation were true, how should there ever happen *discord* among the gods? If Jupiter only signifies the supreme power, as exerted in heaven, and Neptune the same power exerted in earth, how could one join in a

‡ Od. I. 12.

Cudw. In. Sys. 1. 268.

Priestly, & Inst. of Moses. 73.

conspiracy for dethroning the other ? The power of God in one part of the Universe cannot be hostile to the same power in another part of it. Yet we are told by the poets, that *Neptune* took part in a rebellion, the object of which was to seize on the empire of *Jove*.

Further, the opinion, now under consideration, seems little consistent with the personality, so distinctly attributed by the poets to the heathen gods. Their temples and worship were altogether distinct ; and so it appears were their characters and interests. At all events, nothing was less to have been expected, than that the common people should have understood the poets, as meaning what this opinion attributes to them. Accordingly, the learned author, who advances the sentiment, concedes, that the unskilful and sottish vulgar, (for so he terms the common pagans,) might sometimes mistake these gods, not only for so many real and substantial, but also independent and self-existent deities.

It is indeed a matter of no small difficulty to determine, with any considerable exactness, in what light the ancient heathen gods were viewed by their votaries. *Euhemerus*, of Messenia, as mentioned by Cicero, wrote a history of the gods, in which he proved, that they had once been on earth, as mere mortals ; and pointed out the places of their respective deaths and burials.\* This work was translated into Latin, by Ennius ; nor does it appear to have been ill received. See Herodotus, as to the Persians, volume 1. page 136. He says the Persians do not like the Greeks who consider the gods as of human origin. Here is the testimony of a grave historian that the Greeks *did* thus consider them. And the learned writer, whom I have several times mentioned, as labouring to prove, that the heathen, notwithstanding their polytheism, still worshipped one God, unoriginated and eternal, from whom the rest proceeded, confesses, that the fabulous theology, both of the Greeks and Romans, not only generated all the other gods, but even Jupiter himself, assigning him both father and mother. And this, he tells us,

\* Cicero de Nat. Dec. 1, 63.

was tolerated and connived at by the politicians, in way of necessary compliance with the vulgar ; it being so extremely difficult for them to conceive of any being, whose existence never began.

So far as the lower classes of society are concerned, this concession is a complete abandonment of the opinion, which, with so much learning and ability, he endeavours to establish. For surely, if they considered the supreme Jupiter, as having been once a mortal, there could have been no God, whom they considered, as unoriginated and eternal. The probability seems to be, that they had no distinct or fixed notions on the subject. Certain it is, that the language of the poets is not only various, but absolutely inconsistent. At one time it is such, as can be applied only to a being, that is eternal. At other times it is such, as can be true only in relation to mortals.

Let us now inquire into the origin of a fact so remarkable. How did it occur, that the poets attributed to their Supreme Deity discordant and opposite qualities ?

It can hardly be doubted, that man, at his creation, received some knowledge of that being, from whom he originated. The doctrine of one eternal, independent God, when once made known, as it approves itself so clearly to the unbiassed reason of man, would not soon be forgotten. Many ages would elapse, and many errors would be attached to it, before it could be entirely abandoned. Accordingly it is remarked by those, who have most investigated the subject, that the further into antiquity our researches extend, traces of belief of the divine unity and eternity become more numerous.

It is probable, that the most ancient kind of idolatry consisted in the worship of the heavenly bodies.\* Of all natural objects, these are the most striking. In addition to their majesty and lustre, their apparent motions, and the influence, which they have on vegetation, or the state of the atmosphere, is peculiarly calculated to make an impression.

\* *Eno. Præp. Evang. chap. vi.*



From regarding them, as striking displays of divine power, and instruments under the direction of God, men began gradually, and perhaps insensibly, to attribute to them a portion of divinity, and supposed them to perform their exact revolutions by their own inherent intelligence.

This representation is supported by Cicero's treatise on the Nature of the Gods; in which Balbus, the stoic, is introduced, as disputing with an Epicurian, and endeavoring to show, that the planets must be intelligent beings, as they could not otherwise pursue their respective courses with so much order and constancy. His words are these, "*Hanc igitur in stellis constantiam, hanc tantam, tam variis cursibus in omni eternitate convenientiam temporum, non possum intelligere, sine mente, ratione, consilio. Quæ quum in sideribus inesse videamus, non possumus ea ipsa non in deorum numero reponere.*"

That the worship of the celestial luminaries is very ancient, is apparent from the book of Job. "If, saith he, I beheld the sun, when it shineth, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand, this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above. The worship of the hosts of heaven is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, as prevalent among the heathen. It seems indeed to have been, in the countries and periods to which that history relates, the most general kind of idolatry. The sun, moon, and stars, there is little doubt, were first worshipped, not as independent Deities, but as subordinate to the eternal Sovereign of the Universe.

This kind of worship appears to have prevailed very extensively through the heathen world. Nor was it relinquished at so late a period, as the time of Julian the apostate. There is an oration of his, now extant, and recently translated, addressed to the sovereign sun; of which luminary the author professes himself a devout worshipper.

The worship of human spirits was probably subsequent

to that of the celestial bodies. How this kind of worship originated, it is impossible for us to determine. Like the other, it was, we have reason to believe, introduced by insensible degrees. After the death of any one, who had been a benefactor to society, or had acquired a powerful influence, either over the affections or fears of his contemporaries, it was natural, that high respect should be paid to his memory. It would be natural to visit the place, where his remains were deposited, and to erect some monument to perpetuate his name. That which, at first was nothing more than respect, or affection, might, by distance of time, become adoration. Those vigorous or beneficent spirits, which once actuated mortal bodies, were supposed not only to retain their existence after death, but to occupy a sort of intermediate state between man and superior intelligences. As the celestial bodies, so, no doubt, did human souls receive, at first, a subordinate worship. They were worshipped, as deities, inferior to the first Cause, and dependent on him. This subordinate worship seems now to have been gradually transferred from what are called the natural gods, i.e. the heavenly bodies, to the spirits of departed men.

When there were thus two kinds of worship; the one rendered to the Supreme Being, and the other to the spirits of human origin, it is no difficult matter to see, that the latter would gain on the former. It must have been apparent, that no worship would be rendered acceptable to the true God, unless it were pure and rational; unless it proceeded from upright dispositions, and tended to increase them. The worship, and even the contemplation of such a being, would necessarily, to sensual and profligate men, be attended with self reproach. They would, therefore, dislike to *retain God in their knowledge*. But human spirits had neither the purity nor the majesty of God. Previously to their separation from the body, they had all the passions, and all the imperfections and vices, which are common to mortals. In con-

templating such deities, little or no self reproach was experienced by their votaries. In not a few instances, a comparison of moral character would, by no means, be disadvantageous to the latter. The rites and ceremonies, with which dæmons, or departed spirits were worshipped, could not have the same moral expression, as those, used in the service of the Almighty. Hence would result both a ritual and system of morality, in no degree, offensive to the passions and vices of men. In the service of such gods, men would be much more frequent and more engaged, than in the worship of the underived and independent Deity. *His* worship would not, however, be suddenly or entirely neglected. In favor of it, the voice of reason would be loud and distinct.

In this way are we to account for the discordant and inconsistent language of ancient poets. The notion of one Supreme independent God, was not entirely lost. Yet was he not distinctly discernible amidst that varied and impure crowd of deities, who had been profanely ushered into his temple. They recognized his attributes of supremacy, eternity, and independence; but they assigned them to a creature of human origin. They endeavoured to invest a mortal with divine habiliments, without concealing his wants, his dependence, or his vices.

## LECTURE II.

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*Necessity of Revelation,  
as it appears from the gods and worship of the ancient heathen.*

IN the last lecture it was observed, that though there appears to have been from the beginning, a traditionary belief of one uncreated, independent Deity, this belief was gradually enfeebled, until the object of it ceased to be distinguishable amidst a numerous and confused group of gods, who were either parts of the Universe, or had been human beings. But these two classes, do, by no means, comprehend all the objects, to which religious worship was rendered.

Not only the souls of the dead, but the persons of the living, were treated as divine. This was so common among the Romans, that to swear by the genius of Cæsar, and to worship him by burning incense on his altar, were used as criteria, by which to try those, who were accused of defection from the established belief. In this way Pliny, as he informed Trojan, ascertained whether those, who had been prosecuted as Christians, were really such, when the accused were before him, under trial, he commanded, that the emperor's image should be brought, and that they should pay him divine honor, by sacrificing frankincense and wine. They, who did this, were acquitted, as having thereby proved their adherence to the ancient religion.

Not only were divine honors paid to the larger bodies in the universe, and to human beings, both living and dead, but to whatever was found to be of great utility.\* To these we may add particular qualities and conditions of human beings, such as Mind, Fidelity, Safety, Liberty, Concord, Victory, &c. These things, says Cicero, are so great, that they cannot be governed without divine agency, and therefore they themselves are denominated gods.† To these, temples were erected, and sacrifices were offered. Nay, even bad qualities, such as passions and vices, became objects of heathen worship; in justification of which, this reason is assigned, that these bad qualities have frequently great influence on human actions.

That animals, reptiles, and vegetables, received, among the Egyptians, religious adoration, is a fact, universally known. It is, indeed, difficult to contemplate any object, either in the heavens, or on the earth, which has not, in some age or country, been treated as divine. Accordingly an eminent author, whose object was to praise the religion of the heathen at the expense of revelation, is constrained to acknowledge, that “the gentiles did not only worship the whole world taken together, but its parts, yea, even its particular, or smaller parts; thinking it unbecoming, that some of the most eminent parts of him whom they regarded as God, should be worshipped, and other parts neglected.”‡ So true is the remark, that the heathen worshipped every thing, as God, but God himself.

But though there was no great *variety* in the objects, to which the ancient heathen paid religious adoration, the worship of departed spirits was a part of their religion, particularly important, both as to its extent, and the effects resulting from it.|| Mr. Farmer whose name was mentioned in the last lecture, has shown, that human spirits were with a very few exceptions, worshipped in all ancient nations,

\* De Nat. Deor. l. 86.

† Ib. 87.

‡ L. Herbert, as quoted by Leland. 1. 146.

|| In Ethiopia, they worshipped their friends immediately after their death. Herod. 2, 36.

whether barbarous or polished. It is obvious, that this would be a very interesting part of human worship. Men would be pleased at the thought of having a Deity, who had been in *their* situation, had possessed *their* passions, and had experienced *their* wants. But the moral effect of this worship would depend on the character, ascribed to the being, to whom it was addressed. The worship of human spirits, however absurd, might not, in *all* cases, produce immorality. Had the pagan deities been perfect in moral qualities, or even as near perfection as have been some distinguished saints, such as Moses or Daniel, the ancient mythology would have been far less offensive and less injurious, than it must have been, on supposition, that their gods had not only been men, but men distinguished for impurity, violence, fraud, revenge, and rapacity.

If the objects of pagan worship, therefore, as Euhemerus is said to have shown, and as the Greeks acknowledged, were once men, it becomes important to inquire what *kind* of men they were. Were they mild, chaste, upright, meek, benevolent, and pious? Here, in proposing a seemingly rational question, and one, which very naturally occurs, we are involved in absurdity. How could those men, who have since become gods, (gods who were once men,) have been pious? Piety, as the term is now used, has relation to a Supreme Being, and expresses right feelings towards him. But at the time, when the greatest gods among the heathen were men, there could have been no Supreme Being; i. e. no being entitled to the affection, confidence, and adoration of mortals. Those heathen, who believed, that their greatest gods had once been men, must from the nature of the case, have considered them, as men destitute of piety.

But passing over this most important quality, let us briefly inquire what was, in other respects, the character of the pagan gods. Saturn is known to have been jealous, ferocious, and cruel. It is not easy to read without a mixture of disgust and indignation, the biography of this god, as transmitted to us by the poets.

Jupiter's character was doubtless an improvement on that of his father. His government was less oppressive, and his temper less ferocious and savage. But his impurities were more numerous, and not less disgusting.

Mercury, according to poetical mythology, was received into the confidence of the gods for no other reason, than his shrewdness, evinced by repeated acts of dishonesty.† After being admitted to the rank and honors of a deity, Jupiter appointed him his cup bearer, and employed him as the accomplice of his crimes. No description need be given of the character of Bacchus and Venus. The mention of their names, to those, whose attention has been in any degree, directed to classical studies, will bring to recollection their moral qualities.

Now, these were among the most common objects of gentile worship. To the honor of these deities, statues and temples were erected. It is natural to suppose, that the service, whether moral or ritual, which was rendered to such gods, would correspond with those moral qualities, for which they had been most distinguished. We should not expect, either, that the *kind* of worship, rendered to such deities, would contribute to purity of life, or that such purity would be cultivated by their votaries. In regard to both these particulars, facts are precisely, as we should anticipate.\*

The worship of the ancient heathen was a horrible mixture of folly lasciviousness, and cruelty.

Nothing could be more ridiculous than many of their rites; nothing more absurd, than the manner in which they sometimes treated their gods. The Abbe Barthelemy, quoting Theocritus, puts the following words into the mouth of Anacharsis. Having reached the top of mount *Lycæus*, in Peloponnesus, we were present at some games, celebrated in honor of the god Pan. We saw some, who struck the statue of the god with whips. They inflicted this punishment on him, because a hunting, undertaken under his au-

†Anach. III. 35.

\*Leord. i. 174, tells of the debauchery of the Egyptian worship. See also the absurdity.

spices, had not been sufficiently successful to furnish them with a meal. Trav. Anach. iii. 68.

The festivals in honor of Bacchus, called *Dionysia*, were celebrated over all *Greece*, especially at *Athens*. This festival, it appears, was considered, as peculiarly respectable and sacred. By the return of it were the years numbered. The chief archon had a part in the management of it; and the priests, who officiated on this occasion, were honored with the first seats at the public shows. Whatever these festivals were, therefore, they are not to be considered, as exhibiting the character of a few extravagant profligates, but that of every nation or community, into which they were received.

These Bacchanalia, or *Dionysia*, were, it seems, of different kinds, such as the *greater*, the *less*, &c. In some of them, it was usual for the worshippers, in their garments and actions, to imitate the poetical fictions concerning Bacchus; they put on fawn skins, fine linen, and mitres; carried thyrsi, drums, pipes, and flutes; and crowned themselves with garlands of trees, sacred to the god. Some exposed themselves by uncouth dresses, and antic motions. In this manner, persons of both sexes ran about the hills, deserts and other places, wagging their heads, dancing in ridiculous postures, filling the air with hideous noises, and personating men distracted. Nothing could exceed the sensuality, which was allowed on this occasion; revelling and drunkenness were part of the worship, to which they were obliged, in honor of the god.

These impure and infamous celebrations were introduced from Greece into Tuscany, and thence to Rome. At this latter place, the impure actions and indulgences, which accompanied them, became so intolerable, as to call for the interference of the Senate.\* The festival was, for a while, suppressed, but was afterwards re-established.

The *Floralia*, or games in honor of *Flora*, are mentioned

\*Livy xxxix. 13 &c.



by Paterculus, and described by Lactantius.\* The goddess, in whose honor these games were instituted, according to the last mentioned writer, amassed, while a mortal, a large estate, by a life of abandoned profligacy. This estate she bequeathed, at death, to the Roman people. They, in their turn, instituted an annual festival to her honor. What kind of rites would be practised at the annual celebration of such a character, may be sufficiently known, without reading the accounts, transmitted to us from this eloquent father.

Nocturnal festivals in honor of *Kotytis*, the goddess of lewdness, mentioned by Juvenal, were observed, says Apb. Potter, by the Athenians, Corinthians, Chians, Thracians, and others. Sat. ii. 91. line. Potter. i. 440.

The impurities, practised at the *Lupercalia*, in the worship of Cybele, and in the temples of Venus, at Crete, Corinth, and Babylon, need not, and ought not to be mentioned.

But we are not to suppose, that the ancient heathen worship tended to corrupt, in one particular only, those, who engaged in it. Impurity was not the only crime, of which their gods had been guilty; and of course, not the only vice, which their votaries would learn from them.

The dishonesty of Mercury has been mentioned in this lecture. The annual festival of this deity was celebrated at Rome on the fifteenth of May. On which occasion, the merchants, traders, &c. after performing certain ceremonies, prayed, that the god would both blot out all the frauds and perjuries, which they had committed already, and enable them again to practise like impositions. Pantheon, Bell.

Casting but a slight glance on the pagan religion, we are likely to consider it, as exclusively gay, and festive. Increased attention will lead to a different conclusion. It was, in many parts, gay and grossly licentious; but in other parts, it was cruel, ferocious, and unrelenting.

A solemnity, called *Diamastigosis*, was observed at Sparta, in honor of Diana. The name is derived from the scour-

\* Pater. L I. c. xiv. 8. Lac. p. 74.

gings, which boys received on the altar of the goddess. The lashes were continued, till the blood gushed out. They sometimes ended the life of the wretched sufferer. Diana's priestess was nigh at hand, urging increased severity. Parents were present to exhort their sons to endure the lash with patience and constancy. Those, who died by these means, were buried with garlands on their heads, in token of joy and victory, and had the honor of a public funeral. Potter 1. 408. Anach. 11. 271. 320.

There is no part of pagan worship, which strikes us with greater horror, than the well known fact of their offering human sacrifices.

This kind of worship appears to have prevailed to very great extent. It was practised by the ancient Persians. During a tempest, as Herodotus informs us, (Note, vol. 3. p. 296.) the Magi offered human victims. We are informed, that Amestris, the wife of *Xerxes*, buried twelve persons alive, as an offering to *Pluto*, on her own account, that is, as a sacrifice, by which it was designed to procure the favor of the gods for herself. The same Amestris is said to have caused fourteen children of the best families in Persia to be interred alive, as a gratification to the god beneath the earth. When the enemy of *Xerxes* came to a place, called the Nine Ways, the Magi took nine of the sons and daughters of the inhabitants, saith the same historian, and buried them alive, as the *manner of the Persians is*.

It was the custom of the ancient Scythians to sacrifice every hundreth captive. Having poured libations on their heads, they cut their throats into a vessel, for that purpose. From these human victims, they cut off the right arms, close to the shoulder, and threw them up into the air. This ceremony being performed on each victim severally, they depart. The arms remain where they happen to fall; the bodies elsewhere.

Among the Thracians, a human sacrifice was offered every fifth year, to the god *Zamolxis*.

Our account of this sanguinary worship might be much enlarged, on the authority of Herodotus.\*

Human sacrifices, says the Abbe Barthelemi, were not unfrequent among the Greeks. They were common in almost every nation. Twelve Trojan youth were sacrificed by Achilles, at the funeral of Patroclus.

*Leland*, quoting from *Porphry*, enumerates, among those, who sometimes offered human sacrifices, the Lacedæmonians and Athenians.

This mode of worship was early received, and long retained by the Romans. Lactantius mentions the sacrificing of human victims to Saturn, as an ancient rite; informing us, that the sacrifice was not made by immolation at an altar, but by plunging the devoted person from the Milvian bridge into the Tyber. Infants were sacrificed to the same god. Virgil represents Æneas, as sacrificing eight young men to the infernal gods. Livy, in the twenty second book of his history, tells us of four persons, who were buried alive, by way of sacrifice.

Nor does it appear that this practice was abandoned, among the Romans, until the beginning of the second century of the christian era. Though condemned by the best among the philosophers, it had not been extirpated. Even at a later period, than the second century, *all* remains of it were not destroyed. Lactantius asserts, that even in his time, i. e. in the fourth century, offerings of this kind were not wholly abolished. "Latialis, Jupiter etiam nunc sanguine colitur humano."

Among the the Carthaginians, these sacrifices were not uncommon. When they were conquered by Agathocles, King of Sicily, thinking, that the god was angry with them they sacrificed to him two hundred sons of the nobility.

Cæsar gives us the following information, concerning the worship of the Gauls. When they are afflicted with any dangerous disease,—when they are engaged in war, or ex-

\*Beloe's Herod. II. 275. 376. IV. 100.

posed to hazard, they either immolate human victims, or make vows to do it ; and in these sacrifices they make use of the ministry of the Druids. Others, it appears, formed images of immense magnitude, whose limbs were made hollow by a texture of osiers, into which were thrown living men to be consumed by the fire. Human sacrifices, as we learn from Tacitus, were offered by the ancient Germans.

To these testimonies, we shall add a small number from the sacred scriptures. Speaking of the ancient inhabitants of Canaan, the Psalmist asserts, *that they sacrificed their sons and daughters to dæmons, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan.* To the same purpose speaks the prophet Jeremiah. *They built the high places of Tophet, which is the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and daughters in the fire. They built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire, for burnt offerings unto Baal.*

The account here given, of the cruelty and licentiousness, which accompanied the pagan worship, is brief, and might easily be enlarged. The reason why more facts have not been exhibited, and why their sacred rites have not been made to appear more infamous and detestable, is, that any description of them would be indecent, whatever circumlocutions were resorted to, or how great soever might be our caution in the selection of words.

I would now request your attention to those reflections which naturally result from the facts stated. And,

I. Agreeably to what was observed in the last lecture, we perceive, that no objection can be made to the testimony of the poets, in regard to the history and character of the gods. To persons, imbued with those truths, which are derived from the fountain of sacred scripture, it cannot, at first, seem credible, that the human understanding should ever be so deeply degraded, as to receive for religious doctrines, the absurdities of poetic mythology. But the fact is, that the legislators, who organized the system of pagan

worship, formed it agreeably to that model, which the poets gave. Whether the poets invented these fictions, or only gave them a more alluring dress, I pretend not to determine, though the latter is probable. All that I would be understood to assert, is, that the religion adopted by the mass of the people, was the religion of the poets. This was the religion, which the legislators designed should be believed and maintained. The ceremonies of the established worship were so construed, as to preserve in the public mind, not only the virtues, but the vices of those mortals of either sex, whom they denominated gods and goddesses. Arnobius, as quoted by a writer, whose name has been frequently mentioned in this lecture, upbraids the heathen, for "ascribing the most base and unworthy actions to him, whom they described as father of gods and men, the chief God, the thunderer, who shakes heaven with his nod, and to whom they attributed the most divine titles. He thinks, that, if they had any regard to piety and decency, the public authority ought to interpose, by forbidding such representations. Instead of which they encouraged them and admitted them into their religion; whereas they would punish any man, who should cast such reflections on a senator or magistrate."

II. Let us, for a moment, compare the effects, which would naturally result from the worship of such deities, with those, which might be expected from the worship of the true God. To say nothing of such gods, as *Bacchus*, *Venus* or *Mercury*, how was it possible for the votaries of Jupiter to contemplate his character with reverence, or rational affection? What was there to revere in a being, whose passions were more violent, and whose crimes were more numerous than those of human offenders? With what sense of moral obligation could the ancient pagans have gone from Jupiter's temple, when they had been engaged in those rites, which brought his vices to their recollection? Far from blushing at their sensuality, they must have justified it, as

we know they did, by the example of the god, whom they worshipped. "Whenever vice comes to be considered, as a divine quality, as well as an act of devotion, or, in other words, when it is practised, both in honor and in imitation of the gods, it is hereby authorized and sanctioned; and men must sink into the lowest degeneracy." —

On the contrary, when men have been employed in the worship of that Being, whose dwelling is not with flesh;—who is infinitely removed from human passions and human guilt;—whose irresistible power is under the direction of moral purity and infinite wisdom;—who regards with divine indignation, all the workers of iniquity;—and accepts that service only, which proceeds from uprightness and simplicity of heart:—they must perceive, that a virtuous life is essential, as well to their *safety*, as their *duty*. This conviction will be forced upon them, whenever they use a moment's reflection. Accordingly, in a christian country, nothing tends more directly to purify the morals of a community, than general attendance on public worship.

Among those, who entertain just notions of the Supreme Being, it is a natural sentiment, that divine judgments are to be averted by penitence and reformation. This sentiment appears to have made no part of the pagan creed. If public calamities were felt or threatened to appease the gods, and avert the impending evil, they had recourse to some trifling ceremony, but not to repentance and a reclaimed life. They might revive ancient rites, or institute new ones; but reformation of morals, saith *Warburton*, was never made part of the state's atonement. The fact was, as Dr. Priestly has remarked, that the heathen religion had nothing to do with morality.

III. From the facts, stated in this lecture, we learn how to estimate a remark, not very unfrequently made, that, on supposition, a man is sincere, it is of little importance, what may be his creed. That there were many among the ancient heathen, sincerely attached to the prevailing mythology, it

would be unreasonable to doubt. Who can question, that, when the king of Moab took his eldest son, that should have reigned after him, and offered him for a burnt offering, he really believed, that by such a sacrifice, he should obtain divine aid against Israel? who can doubt, that when the Greeks were urgent with Agamemnon to immolate his daughter, they sincerely believed, that this sacrifice would procure for their fleet propitious winds? The same kind of sincerity might be possessed by the worshippers of *Bacchus*, of *Venus*, or *Mercury*. But, will it hence follow, that a sincere thief, a sincere prostitute, or a sincere drunkard, is quite as deserving a moral character, as he, who, with integrity of heart, worships the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

IV. From the representation now given of the worship and gods of the ancient heathen, we perceive, that St. Paul had good reason for charging the gentiles with atheism. *Having no hope, and without God in the world.*

"It may be justly said," observes Dr. Campbell, "that their sacrifices were not offered to God; for, however much they might use the name God, the intention is to be judged of, not by the name, but by the meaning affixed to it. Now—such a being as the Eternal, Unoriginated, Immutable Creator, and Ruler of the world, they had not in all their system—For this reason, they are not unjustly called *atheos*, i. e. without the knowledge, and consequently, the belief and worship of him, who alone is GOD."

It appears, indeed, that, when Christianity made known such a Being, hostility to his character was openly avowed. Dr. Leland, in his Westminister Lectures, gives us the following very important information. "Whatever the Greeks could not accomplish by the sword, they endeavored to effect by the force of impious language.† And such was the madness, with which they were inflamed, that they proposed rewards and honors to such of their poets and sophists, as should write most, wit and elegance, in opposition to the

† Chris. Obs. Feb. 1811.

one, true, and incorruptible God, from whom descended to mankind the gift of eternal happiness by Jesus Christ."

. I close the present lecture with a single remark, relating not to the ancient gentiles, but directly to ourselves, while *professing to know God, may we not in works deny him ; being disobedient and to every good work reprobate ?*

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## LECTURE III.

### *The Necessity of Revelations*

*as it appears from the gods and worship of modern Pagans.*

In the preceding lecture, were considered the character of the heathen gods, and the moral tendency of that worship, which they received.

As the facts, which were then stated, were chiefly such, as occurred among the Greeks and Romans, the most learned and refined nations of antiquity, it is to be presumed, that should our investigations extend to modern pagans, far inferior to them in mental cultivation, appearances would not be more favorable. Inquiries of this kind will constitute the present lecture. They will relate,

I. To the gods ;

II. To the worship and religious ceremonies of modern pagans.

I. We are to inquire concerning the gods, worshipped in those nations, where revealed religion is not enjoyed.



As the *Hindoo* religion is not confined to the vast country of Hindostan, but spreads itself in some form or other, over several divisions of the eastern continent, (Tibet, Birman Empire, Siam,) it is peculiarly entitled to our attention. It appears, likewise, to be a religion of very great antiquity. Sir Wm. Jones, as quoted by Dr. Priestly, considers the institutions of *Mence*, one of their sacred books, as having been written about twelve hundred years before Christ. Their other sacred writings, called the Vedas, are said to have been written three centuries earlier.

Through the indefatigable labor of that illustrious scholar, whose name has been mentioned, and many learned coadjutors in India, the information, which we have on the subject of the Hindoo religion, is somewhat extensive, and much to be relied on.

“ They believe on a Supreme God, who created the world, though not all things pertaining to it.\* This Supreme Being is said to have created a goddess, called *Bawaney*, who was the mother of three subaltern deities. *Brimha*, or *Bramha*, *Vishnou*, and *Sheevah*. *Brimha* was endued with the power of creating the things of this world; *Vishnou*, with the power of cherishing them; and *Sheevah*, with the power of restraining and correcting them. Thus *Brimha* became the creator of man; and, in this character, he formed four casts or classes, which are so distinctly preserved among the Hindoos. Besides these deities, they acknowledge a great number of gods and goddesses, whose characters and offices correspond considerably with the most noted deities of classic mythology. They have likewise numerous demigods, who are supposed to inhabit the air, the water, and the earth, and, in short, the whole world, so that every mountain, river, wood, town, village, &c. has one of these tutelary deities. By nature these demigods are subject to death; but are supposed to obtain immortality by the use of certain drink. Encycl. vol. viii. Art. Hindoos.

\* Corries Ser. 26.

The number of their gods, saith Dr. Priestly, exceeds that of any other people, that we are acquainted with. "I have often been told, says an American missionary, who left Bombay, on account of his health, there are three hundred and thirty millions of gods.

They apply to different deities, according to their different occasions. In sickness, they apply to one god; on a journey, to another; and, when engaged in war, to a third.

"Notwithstanding the general opinion, that *Brimha*, *Vishnou*, and *Shesha*, had the same origin, and bear the same relation to the Supreme Being, some of the Hindoos attach themselves to one of them; and others, to another; and the generality only worship one of the three." What ideas they have of the moral character of these gods, may be conjectured from the following fact. "They say, that these divine personages quarrelled and fought; that, during the battle, the earth trembled, and the stars fell from the firmament." From other sources, and those the most authentic, it appears, that the moral character of Hindoo gods is absolutely abominable.

Worship, paid to the souls of the dead, is a great article in the Hindoo system; and is mentioned, we are told, in almost every page of the Institutes of Mence.

All the neighboring nations, whose religions bear some affinity to that of the Hindoos, are polytheists. The Siamese say, that the reign of a deity is limited to a certain number of years; after which, he sinks into eternal repose, and another succeeds him in the government of the universe.

It appears, that there was, before the christian era, a sect of philosophers in India, denominated *Sammanes*. These Dr. Priestly supposes to be the same with those, who are now called *Schammans*, in Siberia. In the tenets and practices of the *Schammans*, saith he, we may see a faint outline of the religion of the Hindoos. They believe in one God, the maker of all things; but they think, that he pays no attention to the affairs of men, leaving the government of the

world to inferior beings, to whom, therefore, all their devotions are addressed.

Perfectly accordant with this, is the representation of Mr. Nott, lately missionary from this country at Bombay. "It is not to be understood," says he, "that those who worship the gods, by means of images, pay, at the same time, an indirect worship to the great Supreme. The worship of their gods is not a mode of worshipping the Supreme, but a substitute for it."

The Hindoos suppose, not only, that there are superior beings of very different dispositions, some friendly, and others unfriendly to men, but think, the best disposed of them are sometimes partial, obstinate, and vindictive : and, over the malevolent deities, they place one of much superior power, whom they call *Schaitan*. But though he is very wicked, they think it possible to appease him ; and therefore to him they address much of their worship.

In Japan, the religion, as in India, appears to be polytheism in subordination to theism ; i. e. they acknowledge numerous gods ; but one is believed to be supreme over the rest. Many of them consider this supreme god, as far above all human adoration ; and for this cause, address their devotions to deities of subordinate rank. They are gross idolators, as will appear from the following testimony of *Dr. Thunberg*, as quoted by *Bigland*. "In the midst of their temple, saith he, sat *Quanwon*, (the name of one of their divinities,) furnished with thirty six hands. Near him were placed sixteen images about the size of men, but much less than the idol. These occupied a separate room, and partitioned off as it were to themselves. On both sides next to these, stood two rows of gilt idols, each with twenty hands. Afterwards were placed in rows on each side, idols of the size of a man, quite close to each other, the number of which I could not reckon. The whole number of idols in this solemn recess of superstition, is said to be not less than thirty three thousand three hundred and thirty three." *Bigland*, iv. 395.

It was remarked in the last lecture, that not only departed spirits, but living men have received divine worship. The emperors of Rome were worshipped as gods. In that extensive country called *Thibet*, lying west of China, we find a whole nation paying divine honors to a living mortal, under the title of the grand *Lama*. He is the great object of adoration, not only to the inhabitants of Thibet, "but to the various tribes of heathen Tartars, who roam through the vast tract of continent, which stretches from the banks of the Wolga to Korea, or the Japan sea." He is considered by some, as the vicegerent of deity, and by others as Deity himself. He is never to be seen, but in a secret place of his palace, amidst a great number of lamps, sitting cross legged on a cushion, and adorned all over with gold and precious stones; where, at a distance, they prostrate themselves before him, it not being lawful for any to kiss, even his feet. The orthodox opinion is, that, when the grand Lama seems to die, either of old age or infirmity, his soul, in fact, only quits a crazy habitation to look for another, younger and better: and it is discovered again in the body of some child, by certain tokens known only to the lamas, or priests, in which order he always appears."

In the Mahratta country, not far from Bombay, divine honors are paid to a god denominated the *Dea of Chimchore*; i. e. to a boy about twelve years old, in whom Ganesa, the god of prudence, is supposed to have become incarnate. The deity was visited in the year 1809 by Mr. Graham, whose testimony was confirmed to Mr. Nott, by an eye witness, who accompanied him in the visit, which he describes. Nott's Ser. 71.

It has long since been reported, that in the south of Africa there were whole nations, among whom were to be found no ideas of God or religion. This has been recently confirmed by Mr. Kicherer, who resided, as missionary, among the Boschemen. "They have," says he, "no idea of the Supreme Being; consequently they practise no kind of worship."\* In

\*The Rev. E. Evans, was told that the Hottentots worshipped a little insect. Has not Mr. Kircherer suggested the same. See Recorder, No. 49. vol. 3.

the same deplorable ignorance, we find the vast island, or rather continent of *New Holland*.\* In *Pelew*, there is no appearance of religion of any kind; though they have an idea that the soul survives the body. In *Otaheite*, they have numerous gods, each family having a guardian spirit, whom they worship. "The religion of the ancient *Mexicans* seems to have been founded chiefly on fear; the temples being decorated with figures of destructive animals."† Their worship appears to have been directed, not to a benevolent, but to a malignant deity, who delighted in destruction. One of their idols was composed of certain seeds, pasted together with human blood.‡ Their principal deities were thirteen in number; but they also acknowledged a variety of local divinities, who presided over the mountains and valleys.

Of the religion of the Sumatrans, Mr. *Marsden*, as quoted by *Goldsmith*, gives the following account. "If, by religion, is meant a public or private worship of any kind, if prayers, processions, meetings, or priests, be necessary to constitute it, these people are totally without religion.§ They neither worship God, devil, nor idol. They have no word in their language, to express the person of God, except the *Allah* of the Malays," which I suppose, was introduced by the *Mahometans*.||

Having briefly considered the character of the gods, worshipped, by modern pagans, we are, in the second place, to inquire by what kind of services, it was attempted to render these deities propitious.¶

It will not appear, upon examination, that, in the religion of modern pagans, there is less, either of the impure or ferocious, than was noticed, as belonging to the ancient hea-

\* *Pikn.* xi. 473.

† *Bigland*, v. 539.

‡ *Pinkerton*.

§ *Goldsmith* 450.

|| The inhabitants of Paraguay appear, says *Bigland*, to have no idea of a Supreme Deity: but acknowledge an evil principle, whose malevolence they endeavour to avert. v. 501.

¶ See a very interesting account of the *Druses* in *Clarke's Trav.* 251

then worship. Indeed, it must not be forgotten, that the religion of the Hindoos, which, in some form or other, has overspread the most populous countries of the east, is of very high antiquity, and bears no inconsiderable resemblance to the mythology of Greece and Italy. Dr. Priestly, speaking of this system; as contained in the sacred books, observes, that it enjoined human sacrifices. Sir William Jones informs us, that the ancient solemn sacrifice of the Hindoos, was a man, a bull, and a horse. Human sacrifices were anciently offered by the Chinese. They were likewise offered in the north of Europe.

In Scandinavia they held a festival every ninth month, which lasted nine days; and every day they offered nine living victims, men, or brute animals. But every ninth year, the most solemn sacrifices were offered at Upsal, when the king, the senate, and all the citizens of any distinction attended in person; and they chose among the captives in time of war, and among the slaves in time of peace, nine persons to be sacrificed. But, in times of great calamity, they sacrificed persons of more consequence. The first king of Vermland\* was burned in honor of Odin, to put an end to a great dearth. Hacon, king of Norway, offered his son in sacrifice to obtain the victory over his enemy Harold. Aune, king of Sweden, devoted to Odin, the blood of his nine sons, to prevail on that god to prolong his life. The ancient history of the North, says Priestly, abounds with similar examples. In confirmation of which, he quotes from Mallet's Northern Antiquities, the following account. "In the capital of Denmark, they offered every ninth year, ninety nine men, with as many horses and dogs. In Iceland, there were two temples, in which they offered human victims, and a pit or well, into which they were thrown headlong."

The missionaries, who were sent to Otaheite in the year 1797, inform us, "that the inhabitants of that island, though

\*In Sweden.

apparently very devout, and strongly attached to their religious rites, are not less savage in their manner of worship, than those barbarians of the north, whom we last mentioned. Human victims are offered at the accession of every new sovereign, by the chiefs of the several districts, in acknowledgment of their subjection: and on many other occasions, which are distinguished for nothing so remarkably, as the repetition of this dreadful rite."†

The custom of offering human sacrifices is common to that group, called the *Society Islands*. It likewise prevails at the *Friendly*, and *Sandwich Islands*.

Nothing could be more extravagantly ferocious, than the religion of the Mexicans. Fasts, penances, voluntary wounds, and tortures, constituted the essence of their rites. Human sacrifices were deemed the most acceptable; and every captive, taken in war, was cruelly tortured and sacrificed. The heart and head were the portion of the gods; while the body was resigned to the captor, who, with his friends, feasted upon it. The austerities and voluntary wounds of the priests, their poisonous ointments, and other abominable rites, evince, that the entire system was the most execrable, that ever appeared on the face of the earth, alike blasphemous to God, and pernicious to men." (Bigland, v. 501.) The number of human victims, annually offered at Mexico has been thought to be judiciously estimated at two thousand five hundred.\*

Though it does not appear, so far as I know, that the Hindoos, at present, offer human sacrifices, by immolation at an altar, it is nevertheless true, that until within a few years such victims were offered to the river Ganges. The

† Among the Paunees, Indians south of the Missouri, they worship the great star, Venus. They offer human sacrifices. Children they transfix on a pole, and thus offer them. Record. v. iii. 50.

\*There is good evidence that human sacrifices, within a few years past, and within a few miles of Bombay, have been repeatedly made, on various occasions, to local deities. Panop. Feb. 1818. p. 79.

natives of Hindostan, says Dr. Buchanan, particularly the inhabitants of Orissa,\* and of the eastern parts of Bengal, sometimes make offerings of their children to the goddess Gunga, i. e. to the river Ganges. This sacrifice is made in fulfilment of a vow, offered by parents, apprehensive of not having issue. If, after this vow, they have children, the first born is preserved, till they have a convenient opportunity of returning to the river, at the period of assembling at the holy places. They then take the child with them; and, at the time of bathing, it is encouraged to walk into the deep water, until it is carried away by the stream. If unwilling to go forward, it is pushed off by the parents.

The following account is taken from the Asiatic Annual Register. "So lately as November 1801, some European seamen, belonging to the pilot service of Bengal, being on shore, on the island *Sagor*, witnessed a horrid ceremony. On going on shore, they saw the entrails of a human body, floating on the water, and, at the same time, a great number of the natives assembled on the beach, as near as they could conjecture, about three thousand. On asking why so many of the natives were put into the water, they were informed, that the head Fakeer had ordered them thither to be devoured by the sharks, for the prosperity of their respective families. They saw *eleven* men, women and boys thus destroyed; and it further appeared by other incontestable evidence, that the victims, destroyed in November, amounted to thirty nine."

"When a sick person is supposed not to be likely to recover, particularly if he be aged, he is conveyed to the river, in which the lower half of his body is immersed. Water is copiously poured into his mouth; and he seldom survives the operation many hours." There is a striking resemblance between this account, and that, which we receive

\*I forbear to give you that particular account of the Moloch of Orissa, which has been published by Dr. Buchanan, an eye witness.



of the same people, from Herodotus. (Herod. Thal. 99. or Beloe's Transl. v. ii. 119.) "If any man among them," says he, "be diseased, his nearest connexions beat him to death; alledging in excuse, that sickness would waste and injure his flesh. They pay no regard to his assertions, that he is not really ill; but, without the smallest compunction, deprive him of life." The two passages compared, serve to verify a remark of Dr. Robertson, that hundreds even thousands of years have done little towards changing the Indians, either in their customs or character.

It is not improper here to mention the custom, extensively prevalent in India, of the burning of widows with their deceased husbands. Dr. Buchanan acquiesces in the conclusion, that not less, than ten thousand widows, perish annually by self devotement, in the northern provinces of Hindostan alone.

Dr. Leyden has informed us, that the natives of the interior of Sumatra give this account of themselves, that they frequently eat their own relations, when aged and infirm: and that, not so much to gratify their appetite, as to perform a pious ceremony. Thus, when a man becomes infirm and weary of the world, he is said to invite his own children to eat him, at the season, when salt and limes are cheapest. He then ascends a tree, round which his friends and offspring assemble, and as they shake the tree, join in a funeral dirge, the import of which is, "the season is come; the fruit is ripe; and he must descend." "The victim descends: and those, who are nearest and dearest to him, deprive him of life, and devour his remains in a solemn banquet." (Chris. Research. 145, quoting Asiatic Res. x. 203.) This strikingly corresponds with the practice of the ancient Indians, as stated by Herodotus; "the more aged among whom, he asserts, were regularly killed and eaten." Thalia 99, or vol. i. 213.

I had occasion to notice, in a former lecture, that, in the ancient system of heathen worship, there was a most disgusting mixture of lasciviousness and cruelty. This remark applies in full force to the religion of modern pagans.

In Orissa, a province of Hindostan, stands the temple of *Juggernaut*. This idol has been considered, as the Moloch of the present age. His temple is a stupendous fabric. As other temples are usually adorned with figures, emblematical of their religion; so Juggernaut has representations, numerous and various, of that vice which constitutes the essence of his worship. The walls and gates are covered with indecent emblems, in massive and durable sculpture. In the worship of this god are chanted songs, the most indecent and licentious. These, say the infatuated devotees, are the delight of the god. To engage in this worship, incredible numbers assemble annually from the various parts, of Northern India. The assembly, it appears, consists of many hundred thousands. An image of enormous size is drawn on a car, sixty feet high. Under the wheels of this car, it is common for persons to throw themselves for the purpose of being crushed to death. This god is said to smile, whenever a libation of blood is thus made.

This account, let it be considered, is given by an eye witness, a man highly respected for piety and literature. Nor have eight years elapsed, since he was present at this scene of abomination and horror.

Another writer gives a corresponding account, in a spirit, equally indignant. "These pagans," says he, "in forming their idols, cast out every vestige of beauty, every thing, that, by consent of mankind, is supposed to convey pleasing sensations, and, in their place, substitute the most extravagant and unnatural deformity, the most loathsome filth, and the most disgusting obscenity. It is not in language to convey an adequate idea of their temples, and idols; and, if it were, no purpose could be answered by it, but the excitement of painful and abominable emotions." Priest. Ins. of Mos. 227.

Every pagoda, we are told, have a certain number of prostitutes annexed to it, dedicated to its use, by pompous and solemn ceremonies. In the Decan, it is customary for parents to dedicate their children to this profession.

In the worship of modern pagans we find not only all that is impure and sanguinary, but the most degrading stupidity.

By these institutions, the rational nature of man is debased and outraged. The Sovereign of the universe requires a rational service. The worship of the heathen is strikingly the reverse. "What the hindoos call prayer, and which they suppose to be so efficacious, bears little or no resemblance to what Jews and Christians signify by that term. It is no proper address to the Supreme Being, expressive of the sentiments of humility, veneration and submission ; but the mere repetition of certain words, the pronounciation of which can be supposed to operate only as a charm. The worshippers of *Vishnou*, it is said, pretend that his name, though pronounced without any determinate motive, or even in contempt, cannot fail to produce a good effect. This alone, they say, has the power of effacing crimes."

The greatest part of the worship of the Hindoos, it is asserted on the testimony of *Pietro della Valle*, consists of nothing, but music, songs, dances, and in waiting on their gods, as if they were living persons, viz. in presenting them things to eat, washing them, perfuming them, giving them betel leaves, dying them with a particular kind of wood, carrying them abroad in processions, &c. Inst. of Mos. 161.

The *Scharmans* of Siberia, whose religion has been mentioned, pretend, like the ancient Babylonians, to nourish their idols with food. By way of offering them incense, they make a smoke with burning flesh, blood, or boughs of fir and wormwood, before them. But when misfortunes befall them, they load them with abuse ; sometimes dash them against the ground, throw them into the water, or beat them with rods.

Belonging to the Hindoo religion are great numbers of devotees, who give themselves up to the most severe abstinence and torture. Some will keep their arms constantly stretched over their heads, till they become quite withered, and incapable of motion. Others keep them crossed over their breasts, during their lives, some chain themselves to

trees and particular spots of ground, which they never quit. Dr. Buchanan mentions an enthusiast, whom he saw, going on a pilgrimage to Juggernaut, who had, to merit the favor of the god, measured the whole way by the length of his body.

It is related of the ancient inhabitants of the Canary Islands, who worshipped the sun and the stars, that, on solemn festivals, kept in honor of the deity, whom they adored, in a temple seated on the brink of a mountain, they threw themselves down into a vast depth, out of a religious principle, dancing and singing, their priests assuring them, that they should enjoy all sorts of pleasures after a death so meritorious. Miler, as quoted by Leland, ii. 220.

I shall close the lecture with a few remarks on what has preceded.

I. In view of those facts, which have been stated in the preceding lectures, can the necessity of revelation be reasonably denied, or even doubted? The doctrine of the divine existence, which lies at the root of all religion, has been either unknown, or, so corrupted and perverted, as to be no better, than unqualified atheism; and this too in countries, where human mind, far from being permitted to lie inactive, has erected many beautiful and stupendous monuments to its own praise. So that there is no reason to believe, that the true God would, under any circumstances, have been generally known and worshipped without revelation. Most strikingly true, therefore, is the assertion, made by St. Paul, that *the world by wisdom knew not God*. It is considered indeed, that the works of creation, if examined with a fair and impartial mind, are sufficient to indicate the being and perfections of their author. The invisible things of God may be discovered by the things, that are made. But if these invisible things were not, in fact, discovered; but the whole world was overspread with gross darkness; and men had such notions concerning religion, as tended to degrade both the heart and the intellects, and to prostrate, rather than to

establish moral principle ; it follows, that a revelation from heaven was inexpressibly important and desirable.

II. The subject corroborates a remark of Dr. Paley, that the effects of revealed religion are not confined either to those, who cordially, or even to those, who *nominally* embrace it. There are those, in every christian country, who do neither the one, nor the other. They are believers neither in heart, nor profession. But though they reject revealed religion, they do not question the existence of God ; their notions of him are vastly more correct, than those, either of ancient or modern pagans. Why do they not worship the sun, the stars, the rivers, brute animals, or even vegetables, that are planted and cultivated by their own industry ? Why do they not acknowledge, as the rulers of Heaven, those, whose passions and vices once disturbed and polluted the earth ? Is it because their intellects are more penetrating and profound, than were those of the Greeks, Egyptians, Phenicians, and Chaldeans ? No : but because they have been better instructed by that very religion, which they deny, and would gladly subvert. It is because some rays of celestial truth have fallen upon their understandings, notwithstanding the caution, which has been used to prevent a thorough illumination.

## LECTURE IV.

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### *Heathen Morals, especially among the Ancients.*

HAVING, in preceding lectures, considered the character of heathen gods, and the manner, in which they were worshipped, the present will consist of inquiries into the state of pagan morals.

Though men are often censured, with justice, for rashness and want of forethought, there are none, it is believed, from whose calculations futurity is wholly excluded. All persons abstain from many actions, which they would perform, were not the consequences foreseen, or apprehended to be injurious. To those, on whom our happiness is known to depend, we are cautious not to give offence. Religion of every kind recognizes the existence of an invisible power, whether this power is possessed by one, or distributed among many. On this power it represents man as dependent, not only for his present being and prosperity, but for happiness after death, should the soul survive the body. No other hopes or fears seem calculated to produce effects so important, as those which result from religion.

So long, as human creatures give no offence to that Supreme Power on which they depend, no evil is thence to be apprehended. But, whenever offence is given, methods of making it known will not be wanting. Nothing, therefore, can be more reasonable than the fears and hopes, which religion inspires. Nothing can be better founded, than the ex-

pectation, that the Deity will cause us to feel the effect, either of his approbation or displeasure. Now, it is very obvious, that the moral effect of religion will depend on the requirements, or by consequence, on the character of that Power, which is the object of worship. If uprightness, benevolence, and purity, are attributes of God, the unjust, malevolent, and impure, have every thing to apprehend. But, if, on the contrary, the divine attributes are passion, caprice, jealousy, lust, and revenge, it is evident, that the good have nothing to hope, nor the bad to fear. Neither the belief nor worship of such a God, can have any auspicious influence on moral deportment. But, if in addition to this, the rites, prescribed in his worship, be such, as to fix in the mind his bad qualities,—or such, that the performance of them, implies immorality in his votaries, his religion will be at open warfare with good morals, and might be advantageously exchanged even for atheism itself. Considering the character of heathen gods and heathen rites, it could scarcely be doubted, even were the facts unknown, that deep corruption of morals would be the result. Their very religion, we have seen, required them to be immoral. We are not, however, to conclude, that all parts of their religion conspired to produce the same effects on the community. In this religion were recognized a future state and a retribution. Those who were guilty of great crimes, such as murder, adultery, and gross injustice, were threatened with a place in *Tartarus*; there to experience eternal punishment. The truth seems to be, that there was no more consistency in the duties, which their religion required, than there was in the representations, which it made of invisible powers. It exhibited the gods themselves as the perpetrators of crimes. It threatened at the same time, eternal punishment to human offenders. Viewed in some points of light, its tendency was to discountenance crimes; in others, to encourage them, and embolden the guilty. It is impossible to exonerate *Virgil* from this charge of inconsistency. In the

th book of *Æneid*, he paints in lively colours, the torments, endured by criminal ghosts, in the infernal abodes. On another occasion, he mentions *rapti Ganymedis honores*, alluding to a crime in Jupiter, the object of their Supreme adoration, more detestable, than most of those offences, for which mortals in Tartarus are made to endure eternal pains. That neither the poetic, nor any other doctrine of a future state was very generally received, in the advanced periods of the Greek or Roman governments, has been already shown. But even if it had been believed, as understood among the ancient pagans, it would have made but feeble resistance to the inflamed passions of men, excited and sanctioned, as they were, by the licentiousness of the gods.

I shall now briefly set before you some facts, indicating the state of morals, as well in those nations, where the intellectual powers of man, received their highest polish, as among those of less refinement. And,

I. We notice the inhuman custom of exposing infants. In Greece, the father had the right of pronouncing on the life or death of his children. On their birth, they were laid at his feet; and if he took them in his arms, they were saved. When he was not wealthy enough to bring them up, or when he despaired of being able to correct certain defects in their conformation, he turned aside his eyes, and they were instantly carried off to be exposed, or put to death. The laws forbade this barbarity at Thebes, but authorized, or tolerated it throughout almost all the rest of Greece.

Leland asserts, on the authority of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, that Romulus obliged the Romans to bring up all their *male* children, and the oldest of the *females*.

They were allowed, therefore, to destroy all the female children but the eldest. There is a scene in one of the comedies of Terence, which has been noticed by Warburton, as indicating a state of public feelings, corresponding with the spirit of this law. *Chremes* is represented, as enraged at his wife, whom he had commanded to expose a new born



daughter, for having entrusted that office to another, in consequence of which the infant escapes. Of those persons, in whom, the remains of natural instinct, remonstrate against such barbarity, he speaks, as ignorant of what is right, and good, and just. These sentiments, in the play of a favorite author, were publicly uttered on the Roman theatre.

This horrid practice of exposing infants, says a learned author, was universal. This crime was so common among the Arabians, that Mahomet found it necessary to exact an oath of the Arabian women, not to destroy their children.

Nothing more clearly shows, the degree, to which the best and tenderest feelings of our natures may, by the influence of custom and vice, be subdued. In all these instances, the mother's assent to the sacrifice of her infant either is obtained, or it is not. If it is obtained—if maternal affection can be so smothered or extinguished, it is then only, when moral depravity has cast its shadows of deepest horror. But if the sacrifice is made without this consent, the father in demanding it, is pre-eminently cruel. He triumphs at once over two objects, more calculated, than all others on earth, to excite compassion,

II. The feeling displayed in war, and the treatment, which enemies and prisoners received, evince a very corrupt state of morals, in those countries, where revealed religion has not been enjoyed. Homer has doubtless given to the heroes of the Iliad such characters, as were considered honorable and becoming to warriors, in those ages, when they are supposed to have flourished. In many of these, we find unmixed ferocity, and a thirst for revenge, which nothing can satiate. "Why so tender hearted?" says Agamemnon to Menelaus, seeing him hesitate, while a Trojan of high rank, who had the misfortune to be disabled by being thrown from his chariot, was begging his life. "Are you and your house so beholden to the Trojans? Let not one of them escape destruction from your hands; no, not the child within his mother's womb. Let all perish unmourned; let not a ves-

tige of them be seen remaining." It is added by Mitford, whose words I have used, "that the poet gives the sanction of his own approbation, to this inhumanity in a prince, by no means generally characterized as inhuman.

Patroclus, the friend of Achilles, insults with vulgar wit and malignity, the dying character of Hector. Yet this same friend of Achilles, is, on many occasions, denominated the *mild Patroclus*. The same spirit of revenge was afterwards exhibited by *Hector*. When he had killed Patroclus, and stripped him of his rich armour, he postponed the most pressing and most important concerns, equally his own and his country's, to the gratification of a weak revenge. "Losing sight of all the greater objects of the battle, while he struggled for the naked corse, with intention to complete its contumely, by giving it to be devoured by Trojan dogs; and to make his vengeance lasting, by depriving it of those funeral rites, which, in the opinion of the times, were necessary to the repose of souls after death."

Modern nations have set some bounds to the licentiousness of war. To take the life of a suppliant enemy; especially to do this for the avowed purpose of satiating revenge, would be thought among modern christian nations, to be a flagrant violation of the laws of liberal warfare. But Homer ascribes to his most illustrious characters a deportment, more criminal than this. The vengeance of Hector follows not a *suppliant*, but a *slain* enemy. It has for its object, not the body alone, which is incapable of suffering, but that immortal part, which survives the body.

The barbarous custom of denying burial to enemies, slain in battle, appears indeed to have been confined to the *earlier* Greeks. At a period so late, at the Peloponnesian war, such liberty, was not, I believe, ever denied. Though it is remarked by *Mitford*, whose opinion on any subject of Grecian history, is entitled to high regard, that morality was not better understood, in the days of Zenophon, Plato, and philosophy, than in the time of Homer.

The treatment, which captives received from their conquerers among the ancient Greeks, deserves our notice. These, (says one of the personages of the *Iliad*,) are the evils which follow the capture of a town. "The men are killed; the city is burnt to the ground; the women and children of all ranks, are carried off for slaves."

The parting of Hector and Andromache has always, I believe, been considered, as the most tender and affecting scene in the whole poem. In that interview, nothing occurred by which the heart is more powerfully invaded, than the prospect of those sufferings and indignities, which Andromache was to incur, after her hero should be slain. This prospect was not represented to his mind by the spirit of prophesy, but by his knowledge of the treatment, which captives usually received. Nor did he expect any alleviation in her case, on account of her high connexions or noble descent; but looked forward to the time, when she would be employed in menial offices, the slave of a foreign mistress.

———Thy griefs I dread;  
I see thee, trembling, weeping, captive led!  
To bear the victor's hard commands, and bring  
The weight of waters from Hyperia's spring,  
There, while you groan beneath the load of life,  
They cry, Behold the mighty Hector's wife!

*Pope.*

At a period so late as that of the Peloponnesian war, scarcely any thing could exceed the cruelty of the treatment, endured not only by captured cities, but by those, which surrendered. Of this the Melians afford us a remarkable instance. "The Athenians, says Mitford, had no pretence for any command over this people, but that they were stronger. Connected by blood, by habit, and by their form of government, with *Lacedæmon*, those islanders had been nevertheless cautiously inoffensive to Athens, till forced to become enemies. The punishment for this involuntary act, was to have their adult males put to death, and the women and children of all ranks sold for slaves." In the conference, which previously occurred between the Melians and

ambassadors from Athens, the latter avowed that they were influenced by a consciousness of power, rather than by any regard to justice. "In all human competitions," said they, "equal wants alone produce equitable determinations." It is remarkable, that this event occurred at a time, when those studies, and those arts, which are supposed to soften or subdue the rougher feelings of our nature, were cultivated with enthusiastic ardor, and unparalleled success. To use the words of an author recently quoted, "It was where Pericles had spoken and ruled; where Thucyclides was then writing; where Socrates was then teaching; where Xenophon and Plato, and Socrates were receiving their education; and where the paintings of Parrhasius and Zuexis; the sculpture of Pheidias and Praxiteles; the architecture of Callurates and Tetinus; and the sublime dramas of Sophocles and Euripides, formed the delight of the people."

After taking the view of the state of morals among the Greeks, we shall be less surprised at the remark of Kennet, that "the Romans became more corrupt, as they became imbrued in Grecian literature." But to enslave prisoners of war was a custom not confined to the Greeks. "In former times, it was a custom, almost universally established, says an excellent writer, on the principles of political law, that those, who were made prisoners in a just and solemn war, whether they had surrendered themselves, or were taken by main force, became slaves the moment they were conducted into some place, dependent on the conqueror. And this right was exercised on all persons whatever, even on those, who happened unfortunately to be in the enemy's country, at the time, when the war suddenly broke out. Further, not only the prisoners themselves, but their posterity were reduced to the same condition. The effects of this slavery had no bounds. Every thing was permitted to a master, with respect to his slaves. He had the power over them of life and death."

Such treatment did the vanquished expect, even when Ro-

lemnities, and the number of combatants. *Julius Caesar*, in his edile-ship, presented three hundred and twenty pair. *Trajan*, whose natural temper is known to have been mild, continued these games for one hundred and twenty three days ; during which time they brought out one thousand pair of gladiators. Lipsius, as quoted by Dr. Paley, affirms, " that the gladiatorial shows sometimes cost Europe twenty or thirty thousand lives in a month, and that not only the men, but even the women of all ranks, were passionately fond of these shows. (Paley's Ev. 370. 249 Ryan.)

Entertainments of this savage kind were not abolished, until the reign of Constantine, after they existed, says Kennet, about six hundred years.

It is well known, that these games were more or less extensively fatal to the parties concerned. The amusement was to observe with what dexterity, one human being could wound, foil, and slay his fellow. When a gladiator was vanquished, he might indeed supplicate the people ; but he was by no means certain of having his life spared. It appears to have been no uncommon thing for them to refuse the request ; in which case, he was obliged to resume his sword, and fight till death, for their amusement.

Nigh to the amphitheatre was a place called *Spoliarium*, to which, those, who were killed or mortally wounded, were dragged by a hook.

Similar to the feats of gladiators, were those of *Bestiani*, in which human beings were brought forth to combat with wild beasts, and to be devoured by them. Kennet, 272.

During the early existence of these games, females it appears, were not allowed to attend them. This restriction was afterwards removed ; and seats in the amphitheatre were prepared for their accommodation.

Though the condition of the gladiators was commonly that of slaves or captives, yet so generally popular were these games, that freemen, in a short time, chose to take a part in them, and hired themselves out for the amphithea-

tre. Nay, the knights, the noblemen, and even senators themselves, at last, were not ashamed to assume this profession ; so that an edict of Augustus was necessary to prevent senators from becoming gladiators. Nor was this all. Roman ladies, and even those of high rank, became, by attending these exhibitions, so lost to all that tenderness and timidity, which are supposed to characterize the sex, as to assume the habit and weapons of combatants, and contest with men, on the ensanguined arena. This has been animadverted upon by Juvenal, with his appropriate severity. By Cicero, however, these entertainments were thought scarce worthy of reprehension. *Crudele gladiatorum spectaculum et inhumanum nonnullis videri solet : et haud scio an ita sit, ut nunc fit.* "To some, this public show of gladiators, appears cruel and inhuman. Perhaps, as the thing is now managed, it may be so."

That such an author should have spoken in such terms, of an institution, calculated to deaden the best sensibilities of the heart, and to substitute in their place a brutal ferocity, shows at once the imperious influence of custom, and the inadequacy of gentile philosophy, even in the most elevated minds, to fix the standard of morality.

V. It is well known, that under the Roman government, extreme severity might be exercised towards insolvent debtors.

From the account contained in the second book of *Livy*, it appears, that the creditor had power, not only of taking from the debtor all his possessions, but likewise of maiming and torturing his body.

Restraints, were, indeed, at a late period, imposed on the cruelty and rapacity of usurers, whereby it was provided, that no debtors should be kept in irons or bonds ; but that the goods of the debtor, not his person, should be given up to his creditors.

After a certain number of citations, we are told, that the law granted to the debtor thirty days of grace to raise the

sum, for which he was accountable. After the thirty days had expired, if the debtor had not discharged the debt, he was led to the prætor, who delivered him over to the mercy of his creditors. These bound him and kept him in chains for the space of sixty days. Afterwards, for three market days successively, the debtor was brought to the tribunal of the prætor. Then a public crier proclaimed in the forum the debt, for which the prisoner was detained. It often happened, that rich persons redeemed the prisoner by paying his debts. But if no person appeared in his behalf, after the third day, the creditor had a right to inflict the punishment, appointed by the law. The law may be translated into the following words. "Let him on the third market day, be punished with death, or sold beyond the Tiber, as a slave."

VI. It will give some further knowledge of the moral state of the ancient heathen, to consider their treatment of slaves. That a large proportion of the population consisted of slaves, is well known. Throughout almost all Greece, says the Abbe *Barthelemy*, quoting from *Athenæus*, the number of slaves infinitely exceeds that of citizens. A similar, but more definite account is given by *Mitford*. (*Trav. of Ana.* 1 242. Vide *Tacit.* p. 425—6.)

In Lacedæmon, slaves were treated with great severity. Nothing, it appears, could exceed their cruelty to their slaves, who cultivated their grounds for them, and performed all their works and manufactures. These slaves had no justice done them, says *Dr. Leland*, whatever insults or injuries they suffered. Among the Spartan youth, it was customary, not only to hunt wild beasts, but to lie in ambush for the Helots, or slaves. Thus were these unhappy men, to whom the State was so much indebted, attacked and slain, for the purpose of rendering their masters' sons adroit in the use of arms.

There is another passage in the Lacedæmonian history, which clearly shows how much reason the Helots had to complain, not only of the cruelty, but also of the perfidy of their masters.

When, in the midst of the Peloponesian war, the Spartans had cause to entertain fears of the Helots, proclamation was made, that such as thought themselves worthy of meriting by good conduct in arms, the honor of freemen, should present themselves before the magistrate. Two thousand presented themselves, and were all secretly slain! (Mitford 1. 292. Thucyd. 1. 360.)

Herodotus informs us, that the Scythians, praised as they have been for their innocence, put out the eyes of their slaves.

Nor does it appear, that slavery at *Rome* assumed a milder aspect than that at *Sparta*. It was not unusual, we are informed, for masters to put their old, sick, and infirm slaves, on an island in the Tyber, where they were suffered to perish. (Lel. 11. 67.) Masters had an absolute power over their slaves. (Juv. vi. 219.) They might scourge, or put them to death at pleasure. (See Herod. iii. 53. and Potter's Ant. art. Helots) When the former of these punishments was inflicted, the slave was suspended with a weight tied to his feet, that he might not move them. When they were punished capitally, it was commonly by crucifixion.

Even this dreadful punishment according to Juvenal, might result from caprice, or a sudden gust of passion in a profligate mistress.

The following account I find quoted by three respectable authors. Vedius Pollio, an intimate friend of Augustus, literally fed his fishes with the flesh of his slaves. "This cruelty was discovered, when one of his servants broke a glass in the presence of the emperor, who had been invited to a feast. The master ordered the servant to be seized. But he threw himself at the feet of the emperor, begging him to interpose, and not suffer him to be devoured by fishes. Upon this, the causes of his apprehensions were examined; and Augustus, astonished at the barbarity of his favorite, caused the servant to be dismissed, all the fish ponds to be filled up, and the chrystal glasses of Pollio to be broken to pieces."



Here, you will observe, that this horrible punishment was to have been inflicted for no greater crime, than the casual breaking of a piece of furniture:—That this Vedius Pollio lived in the Augustan age, when Roman literature and refinement were carried to the greatest perfections: And that though the emperor ordered that his fish should be destroyed, and his glasses broken, the favorite received no other punishment.

We may form some opinion of the extent of human sufferings, occasioned by slavery in the Roman Empire, if, in addition to these facts, we consider, that a single individual, seven years before the christian æra, had slaves to the number of four thousand one hundred and sixteen; and that if any one of these made an unsuccessful attempt to regain his liberty, he was marked on the forehead, with a red hot iron.

In another lecture, by divine permission, the subject will be resumed; and further proof will be exhibited of the moral degradation of the heathen, whether of ancient or modern times.

## LECTURE V.

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### *Heathen Morals.*

In this lecture, the subject of the last, will be further pursued. Additional evidence will be exhibited, of the corrupt state of morals, prevailing among pagans, whether of ancient or modern times. And,

I. We notice the crime of unchastity.

After what has been already said on the moral character of heathen divinities, and on the nature of those rites, which were observed in their worship, much evidence will not be required to convince you, that chastity, as inculcated by christianity, and by every rational system of moral philosophy, made no very conspicuous figure in the pagan character. For this reason, as well as for others, not less obvious, you will neither expect nor desire, that a long series of proofs should be adduced.

That both the Greeks and Romans suffered to pass without censure, and openly tolerated those connexions, which christianity pronounces criminal, and for which, it declares, that the *wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience*, is well known. That, which was allowed by such philosophic statesman, as Solon and Cato, would not be likely to be scrupled by an ignorant, unbridled populace.

Alluding to licentious intercourse among persons, who had not acknowledged the sacredness of hymenial obligations, Cicero in his oration for *Calpurnius*, makes the following extraor-

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dinary appeal. *Quando enim hoc non factum est? Quando reprehensum? Quando non permissum? Quando denique fuit, ut quod licet not liceret?*

We may have occasion hereafter to animadvert upon this sentiment, as showing how unqualified were the most enlightened among pagans to become guides to others, either in the science or practice of morality. But, at present, we consider it only, as indicating the licentiousness of the senate, before which the sentiment was uttered, and the licentiousness of the Roman nation, even in its better days. For, of any one, who should condemn the liberty of which he speaks, it is added, *abhoret non modo ab hujus seculi licentia verum, etiam a majorum consuetudine atque concessis.*

Even in that interesting and sacred relation, from which proceeds so much of the enjoyment and purity of domestic life, the Greeks and Romans were little acquainted with those better and finer feelings, which christianity inspires. The *Spartans* could hardly be said to have an individual existence. They were, in every thing, identified with the State. Marriage was little more, than an institution for keeping up their military establishment: and to this purpose, *Lycurgus* himself, designed that it should be made grossly subservient.

At Athens, before the age of *Pericles*, wives were treated merely as a better kind of servants. From them they differed little in their education. With their female slaves they lived in a secluded part of the house, associating little with each other, and scarcely at all with men, even their nearest relations. Thus ignorant and degraded, the Athenian matrons gradually lost, first the respect of their husbands, and, by unavoidable consequence, their affection. Unhappily there existed at this time at Athens a set of profligate females, whose intellects and manners were more cultivated. To associate with these, became customary, not only for the thoughtless and dissipated, but even for statesmen and philosophers, whose example ought to have inflicted on vice the brand of infamy.

Set free from the restraints of shame, and emboldened by

such examples, licentiousness no longer courted retirement, but openly asserted claims to general influence and dominion.

That little sanctity was attached to matrimonial contracts, and that conjugal infidelity had become general among the Romans, at the time, when christianity was introduced, appears both from *Juvenal* and *Tacitus*. We ought indeed to make great allowances for the liberty, used in poetical satires; but it is impossible to imagine, that any author could have written with the spirit of *Juvenal*, unless it had been roused by witnessing a general contempt not only of chastity, but decorum.

*Tacitus* was no poet. From his testimony no deductions are to be made on account of hyperbole or imagination. Yet he speaks of adultery, as a crime which had become common, (*culpa inter viros et feminas vulgata*.) *Tac. Annal.* 150.

Nothing gives us a more unfavorable opinion of Roman chastity, than the welcome reception, found by pantomimes and buffoons, both in private families, and on the stage. Of buffoons, *Rosinus* informs us, there were two kinds; one to give amusement in private circles, and the other on the theatre. He adds, that on account of the licentiousness of their language, and the indecency of their gestures, they became extremely acceptable to the people. (*Rosini. Ant. Rom.* 325. *Salvian.* 185.) This spectacle, new in the time of Augustus, was performed by action alone. It was exhibited, says *Gifford*, on a magnificent theatre raised for that purpose. It so astonished and delighted the people, that they forsook, in some measure, their tragic and comic poets, for the more expressive ballettes of *Pylades* and *Bathyllus*. (*Gifford's Juv.* 168.) We can form no idea, continues this author, of the attachment of the Romans to these exhibitions. It degenerated into a kind of passion, and occupied their whole souls.

When it is considered, that, by these pantomimes, were represented, before vast and promiscuous assemblies, some

of the worst actions of the heathen gods ; and that the actors were held in admiration, not by the common people only, but by persons of high authority, and even by the emperors themselves, it is easily seen how extensively and rapidly the contagion would be communicated, and how insensibly, but inevitably would be dissolved those restraints, which it is the honor of our intellectual and moral natures to feel, to acknowledge, and obey.

It is well known, that a species of impurity, still more flagitious and hateful, was neither unknown or uncommon among the ancient heathen. Xenophen, as quoted by Leland, represents this to have been so common, that it was, in many places, established by the public laws. Aristotle informs us, that, among the Cretans, there was a law encouraging this crime. The law giver of Athens, it is reported, apparently on good evidence, neither passed any general law against this vice, nor was himself pure from its contamination. Cicero, from a passage, contained in his fifth book of Tusculan questions, appears to have considered the Greeks, as generally yielding to it. Nor did the Romans, in this particular, differ from them ; as appears undeniably from the second Eclogue of Virgil, from several passages in the writings of Tully, but especially from the Satires of Juvenal. The same abominations are now practised both in China and Japan, where they are accounted neither a crime nor a singularity.

After what has been stated, no one will be surprised, at learning the prevalence of other vices. Those, which have been mentioned, show an entire prostration of moral principle. Open vice, must of course, have been exhibited, just in proportion as interest could be advanced, or passions gratified.

Accordingly we are told by Polybius, as quoted by Dr. Middleton, that the want of integrity, was general among the Greeks. "Those, who managed the public monies in Greece, though they have ever so many bonds and sureties for their

behavior, could not be induced to act honestly, or preserve their faith in the case even of a single talent."

That the Greeks had nothing of those moral restraints, which result from a firm conviction of the divine existence, perfections, and government, and from an expectation of being answerable at a righteous tribunal, has been made sufficiently evident by the testimony of Thucydides, concerning the moral effects, which the plague produced among the Athenians. This testimony was exhibited in a preceding lecture.

As to the moral state of Rome, we may have full satisfaction, from the testimony of them, who were eye witnesses. No one can read Sallust's account of the Jurgurthine and Catalinean wars, without forming a very unfavourable opinion of that nation, both as to private morals and public virtue. He represents it, as sunk in voluptuousness and profligacy. The conspiracy which Cataline formed, was extensive. Men of all ranks were engaged in it. Yet the design was nefarious; and such were the characters, by whom it was supported.

Jugurtha, who well knew, declared, that all things were venal at Rome; and his own power and interest were preserved many years, by bribing the senate, and those generals, who were sent to subdue him.

The works of Horace and Juvenal go directly to evince Roman depravity. No one can read the works of the former, without being convinced, that those, among whom he lived, and of whom he wrote, were emphatically *without God in the world*. But his severity towards others is not the only evidence, by which we are to judge. As he himself wrote in character, of a moral instructor and without concealing his name; as, moreover he says much in favour of virtue, it is hardly to be supposed, that he thought his own character very far below what might reasonably be expected of a teacher of morals. Yet no one, in the least acquainted with his writings, can doubt, for a moment, of the great impurity and sensuali

ty of his life. His avowed course of living was that of an ingenious, polished, and well taught libertine, who, in expectation of no future state, was determined to get as much of mirth and sensual pleasure, as could be obtained in the short space of mortal existence. Now, if such was the avowed life of one, who wrote much against the dissoluteness of manners, then prevalent, we can have no doubt, that the tone of morals in general was extremely depressed.

The writings of the other Roman satirist are more remarkably to our purpose, than those of Horace. One can scarcely conceive, that vices, so various, so excessive, gross, and nauseating, should, among a people of high refinement, degrade the human character. Whatever of selfishness, cruelty, revenge, or lust, the boldest imagination is able to conceive, was practised among that people, whose power gave law to all nations, and whose literary productions still excite the admiration of the world. Whoever compares the descriptions of Juvenal, with those, contained in the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans, will be forcibly struck with the resemblance. After speaking of crimes, the most unnatural and detestable, the latter proceeds to say, that the Gentiles were *filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness ; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity : whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventers of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.*

This is no more, than their own poets acknowledge, mentioning, at the same time, the names of persons thus guilty : and using a grossness of language, which the inspired apostle is cautious to avoid.

We are next to consider, more particularly, the morality, prevailing among pagans of later times.

I. In regard to the Chinese, though their external manners, says a late writer, are marked with the most ceremonious politeness, and seem to indicate the greatest mildness

and benevolence of disposition, some of their customs and usages denote the most singular unfeelingness, and most savage brutality. (Bigl. iv. 312.)

The horrid practice of infanticide, sanctioned by custom, and tolerated by government, is here carried to the most shocking extent.

The police of Pekin, says a late writer, employ persons to go about the streets at an early hour, every morning, for the purpose of picking up the children, that have been thrown out in the night. The bodies are carried to a common pit without the walls, into which, those, that are alive, as well as those that are dead, are promiscuously thrown. According to the best accounts, no fewer, than nine thousand infants, are thus inhumanly butchered by their unfeeling parents, or thrown out and buried alive every year, in the city of Pekin; and it is supposed, that about an equal number are destroyed in the same manner, in the other parts of the empire. The substance of this account is taken from *Barron* a late traveller in China.

“The practice of infanticide, says Sir Wm. Jones, so far as regards *female* infants, is fully substantiated with respect to a particular tribe on the frontiers of Juanpore; a district of the province of Benares. A race of Hindoos, called Rajekoomars, reside there. And it was discovered in 1789 only, that the custom of putting to death their female offspring, by causing their mothers to starve them, had long subsisted, and did actually then very generally prevail among them. The resident at Benares, where the Rajekoomars dwell, had an opportunity of authenticating the existence of the custom from their own confessions.”

Nothing can be more satisfactory, than this evidence. The illustrious author, from whose communication this extract is made, introduces the account by remarking, that the crime alledged is of such a nature, as ought not without the most unexceptionable evidence, to be believed. Yet he considered the fact, as fully substantiated.



The practice is common among a race of Hindoos, called Rajpoots. Without alledging any other reason, than the difficulty of providing for daughters, they starve their female infants to death.

To a similar fact, we have a more recent witness in Dr. Buchanan; from whose memoirs the following is taken. "If a child refuse the mother's milk, whether from disease, or from any other cause, it is supposed to be under the influence of an evil spirit. In this case, the babe is put into a basket, and hung upon a tree, for three days. It generally happens that before the expiration of that time, the infant is dead, being destroyed by ants, or by birds of prey. If it be alive at the end of three days, it is taken home, and means are used to preserve its life."

As to the general moral character of the Hindoos, the author, last mentioned, has exhibited the testimony of three competent Judges. The *first*, a King of Hindostan, who was well acquainted with the *higher* class of the Hindoos. The *second*, a city magistrate, who was conversant with the *lower* classes. The *third*, an author, well versed in their mythology. The first of these was a Mahometan; the second a modern philosopher; and the third a Christian.

According to the first, who was no less a personage, than Tamerlane the great, "The inhabitants of Hindostan and Bengal, are equally debilitated in their corporeal, and inert in their mental powers. They are inexorable in their temper, and at the same time, so penurious and sordid in mind, that nothing can be obtained from them, but by personal violence. It appears, unquestionable to me, said that mighty chieftain, that this people are under the displeasure of the Almighty: otherwise a prophet would have been appointed for them to turn them away from the worship of idols, and fire, and cows, and to direct them to the adoration of the true God. Like those dæmons, who, with a view to deceive, can assume the most specious appearances, the native of Hindostan cultivates imposture, fraud, and decep-

tion, and considers them to be meritorious accomplishments. Should any person trust to him the care of his property, that person will be only the nominal possessor of it."

The second witness is Mr. Holwell, who was a city magistrate at Calcutta, about the middle of the last century. "The Gentoos," says he, "are as degenerate, crafty, and superstitious, litigious, and wicked a people, as any race of beings in the old world, if not eminently more so; especially the common run of Bramins. And we can truly aver, that during almost five years, that we presided in the Judicial Court of Calcutta, never any murder, nor other atrocious crime came before us, but it was proved, in the end, that a Bramin was at the bottom of it."

Now, if such were, in general, the character of the instructors of religion, we wonder the less at that entire want of integrity, which he charges upon the people.

The third witness is Capt. Wilford, author of *Essays on Indian and Egyptian Mythology*, and who had long resided in the society of the Bramins. "The Pundit of Capt. Wilford having, for a considerable time, been guilty of interpolating his books, and fabricating new sentences in old works, to answer a particular purpose, was at length detected, and publicly disgraced. As a last resort to save his character, he brought *ten* Bramins, not only as his compurgators, but to swear by what is most sacred in their religion to the genuineness of the extracts."

This depravity of morals was the legitimate offspring of their religious system. Agreeably to a remark made in regard to the ancient pagans, it may be said of those Hindoos, that their religion corrupted them. Such was the character of their gods, and such the ceremonies observed in their worship, that moral sensibility and discernment must have been gradually destroyed. By those scenes, which were exhibited at their temples on days of public festivity, the law written upon the heart must have been effaced, and all distinction between virtue and vice confounded.

Of a similar tendency were their ideas of a retribution. (Ins. of Mos. Ch. xxiii.) Nothing could be more inadequate, than their standard of right and wrong. We look in vain, among their institutions, for those great principles of morality, alike recognized in every system of true religion, whether natural or revealed. They acknowledged a heaven; but it was not to be exclusively the reward of virtue. They feared a hell; but it was not vice alone which put them in danger of being sent thither. Future punishment was threatened to those, who should kill an animal, or even through ignorance, shed blood from the body of a Bramin. "Whereas, those rulers of the earth, say they, who, desirous of defending each other, exert their utmost strength in battle, without ever averting their faces, ascend after death, directly to heaven." (Page 269, 264.)

It was observed, in a former lecture, that according to the testimony of *Mr. Marsden*, whose history of *Sumatra* is mentioned in terms of high approbation, the inhabitants of that island render worship to no Supreme Being. The same author, as quoted by *Col. Symes*, expresses a belief, that the inhabitants in the northern part of the island eat human flesh; and the authorities, on which he grounds his belief, says *Col. Symes*, seem to authenticate the fact. It does not however appear, that human flesh was substituted by them in place of ordinary food, but eaten rather, as a barbarous ceremony, to indicate revenge on their enemies, or abhorrence of crimes, the only victims being prisoners taken in war, or capital convicts." The New Zealanders do this, though they believe, that the soul of a man, whose body is thus devoured, is doomed to eternal torments.

In the Boston Repertory for August, if I mistake not, 1810, we were told, that a British ship's crew, consisting of a number between thirty and forty, were, all but one, eaten by the inhabitants of New Zealand.

This account is rendered the more credible from its coincidence with the character of the New Zealanders, as given us

by Pinkerton, who represents it, as customary, for them, to devour their captives taken in war.

In Anzico, a kingdom in the northwest of Africa, it is asserted, that the markets are supplied with human flesh ! nay, it is even affirmed, that *all* the dead are devoured.

The inhabitants of New Holland, it is well known, are in the most deplorable state of ignorance, barbarity, and vice. In some of their ceremonies, the very form and character of man seems despised, and the superiority of brutes acknowledged.

On a former occasion, something was said of the religion of the Otaheitans. We now speak of their *morals*.

From the following statement, made by missionaries, sent to these savages in 1797, it appears, that the favourable impressions, at first received as to their state and character, were by no means justified by more thorough acquaintance. The state of society was soon found to be such, that, while it excited the compassion of the missionaries, it presented many discouragements. The duties of husbands and wives, of parents and children, are neither understood nor practised. They view their children as property, which every parent has a right to dispose of according to his own inclination. And the event is, that many of them are murdered, as soon as they are born. But the most horrible source of pollution and cruelty, found among them is the *Arreey Society*. This is an association of individuals, descended from the principal families in the Society Islands. They are continually wandering about from one island to another, and support themselves by plundering the inhabitants. Each of these men has two or three females, whom he calls his wives. But their habit is to live in a state of promiscuous concubinage, and uniformly to murder every infant, which is the fruit of their intercourse.

Parents, when they become old, are treated with every mark of neglect. Their society is avoided as a disgrace. And, indeed, to such a height has their contempt of old age aris-

en, that the term "old man" is proverbially used to express any thing worthless.

The inhabitants of the Caribbean Islands were not only cannibals, but fed upon their own children. Nay, it is asserted on such authority, as was satisfactory to Mr. Locke, that their children were mutilated, for the purpose of their being fattened for the day of slaughter.

The same author quotes, from the voyage of *Boungarten*, an account of certain persons among the Turks, degraded beneath even brutality itself, who are, nevertheless, regarded as saints. The passage is too remarkable entirely to escape the notice of those, who study the Essay on Human Understanding: and too disgusting, though clothed in Roman language, to be introduced into a public lecture.

Thus have we taken a very brief view of the religious and moral state of the heathen world, as it was before the coming of Christ, and as it has been in modern times. Whether we fix our attention on nations, the most civilized, or the most barbarous, we find them entertaining absurd, incoherent, and blasphemous views as to religion: we find them debased and polluted with the greatest crimes. In others words, *they were alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance, which was in them.*

In view of all the evidence, which has been adduced, no person, it is believed, making a sober use of his intellectual powers, will, for a moment, assert, that accessions of light and knowledge on the subjects of morality and religion, were not, from some source or other, devoutly to be desired.

Some, it is possible, however, may not be convinced, that this inference can fairly be made from the facts, collected in this and the preceding lecture. What, it may be asked, though the heathen both of ancient and modern times, have been dissolute in their manners? If that will prove any thing to the disadvantage of their religion, is there not a sufficiency of vice among christians to authorize the same conclusion in relation to theirs?

I answer that the difference between the two cases con-

sists in this ; when christians violate the principles of morality, they as certainly violate the principles of their religion. Whereas the pagan might be impure, dishonest, and revengeful ;—nay, all human vices might flourish in him, with unrestrained luxuriance, and yet his character not be materially different from theirs, whom his religion taught him to worship as gods. It has been shown, that the *tendency* of paganism was to pollute the heart, and to debase the character. When it can be shown, that such is the natural effect of christianity, it will, I presume, be abandoned by those, who are now its votaries. But this, it is well known, can never be made to appear.

In regard to heathen religion, three things, you will observe, have been shown ; 1. The gross, absurd, and impious opinions, which it taught concerning God and a future state ; 2. The cruel and obscene rites, which were practised in the established worship ; 3. The general profligacy of pagan manners.

The two last are clearly the result of the other. Their viciousness of character, and the cruelty and licentiousness of their worship, were the legitimate offspring of their false sentiments as to religion. Hence it appears, that their errors in speculation were both practical and dangerous.

But, though what has been said, will probably be thought sufficient to show, that further instruction on the relation, duties, and destinies of man, was greatly wanted ; further doubts may still arise, whether any thing supernatural were requisite for this purpose ; and whether the light of philosophy might not have been sufficient to expel the incumbent darkness.

In regard to the soul's immortality, this question has been already answered. Philosophy was shown to have given no certainty on that subject. How far it was an adequate guide on other subjects in religion, and what were its powers in purifying the heart and the life, will, if God permit, be considered in a future lecture.

## LECTURE VI.

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### *Ancient Philosophers inadequate guides in Religion.*

HAVING contemplated the darkness, in which the heathen world was enveloped, and that general profligacy, by which the human character was degraded, we are now to inquire whether the evil were likely to be remedied by those, whose superior application and wisdom procured for them the distinction of philosophers.

That mankind were not either reformed, or well instructed on the subjects of religion, in consequence of philosophy, those facts, which have been exhibited, sufficiently prove. That there were *no instances*, however, in which philosophical instruction produced any good effect on the sentiments and morals of them who received it, I do not assert. Solitary individuals, and even communities may have received benefit from such instruction. *Polemo* was suddenly recovered from a life of effeminacy and dissipation by a moral lecture from *Xenophanes*. A surprising reformation is said to have been effected at *Crotona* by the school of *Pythagoras*. But notwithstanding these instances, no general alteration was produced in theological opinions,—no extensive amendment in the views and morals of men. Their worship was not henceforth confined to one being, Almighty, holy, and independent: nor was the number of pagan deities even diminished. Whatever we have noticed of absurdity in sentiment, licentiousness in worship, or viciousness in deportment existed, long after *Pythagoras* had established his school in Italy.

We shall now endeavour to show, that this is a matter, which ought to excite no surprise: that pagan philosophy not only *did* not produce correct sentiments and pure morals, but had no tendency towards such a result. And,

I. That philosophy, was no adequate guide, as to subjects most interesting to man, appears from the confession of some who professed it. *Socrates* acknowledges, that divine instruction and assistance were necessary to enable men to worship God in a suitable manner.

To the same purpose speaks *Jamblicus*, as quoted by Leland. It is manifest says that philosopher, that those things are to be done, which are pleasing to God; but what they are, it is not easy to know, except a man were taught them by God himself, or by some person, who had received them from God, or obtained a knowledge of them by some other means."

II. Philosophers were extremely erroneous and discordant in regard to their views of the Supreme Being. There is no subject, says Cicero, concerning which, not only the ignorant, but also the learned, are so little agreed. While some denied his existence, others spake of it in very doubtful terms, or confounded his existence with that of the Universe.

*Bion* of Scythia was openly an atheist, and took much pleasure in ridiculing those who sacrificed to the gods; though at the close of his life, he retracted his former sentiments, and professed repentance for all, which he had said offensive to religion.

*Theodorus* was ejected, first from Cyrene, and then from Athens, on a charge of atheism. This charge is supported by the authority of Cicero, *Plutarch*, and *Suidas*, as quoted by Stanley. *Protagoras* doubted, whether there were gods, says Cicero, and *Diagoras* denied them. *Democritus* either entirely rejected the notion of Deity, or allowed him no share in the creation and government of the world. The same may be said of *Epicurus*. As it respects religion, or even morality, it is immaterial, which of these opinions is embraced.



Many of those, who acknowledged an invisible, presiding power, had, notwithstanding, very lax opinions as to the relation, subsisting between that power and the objects of this world. Of the *Ionic* school, instituted by Thales, no one, says Leland, before Anaxagoras, attributed the creation of the world to an intelligent mind.

To the same Anaxagoras, the preceptor of Socrates, Miford attributes the first conception of an eternal, almighty, good being, independent of matter.

Among ancient philosophers, there is none, perhaps, who has been held in higher estimation by the christian world, than Socrates. He entertained sentiments concerning the Supreme Being, which were, in a great measure, just, and were highly elevated. Yet, in his last conversation with his disciples, a little before he received the fatal potion, he spake of the *gods*, in the plural number, and did not reprove his friends for swearing by them. Nay, in his defence before his judges, he addresses Melitus, his accuser, in the following manner, "I conjure you in the name of those gods, whose interest is now concerned, to explain your meaning more clearly." Moreover, Socrates habitually sacrificed to the gods after the manner of his country. And Xenophon informs us, that he appealed to this fact to repel the charge, brought against him of 'not acknowledging as gods, those, whom his country recognized as such. Besides, what account can be given of the sacrifice, which, in the last moments of his life, when there could be no temptation to dissemble his opinions, he directed his friends to offer to *Esculapius*? I know of no method of accounting for this, but by supposing, that, besides the one Supreme Being, "Socrates admitted the existence of others, who hold a middle station between God and man, to whose immediate agency he ascribed the phenomena of nature, and whom he believed to be particularly concerned in the management of human affairs." This is indeed the opinion attributed to him, by Dr. Enfield. It appears then, that, however correct may have been the opinions of Socrates, as to the Supreme

Being, he was nevertheless a polytheist, paying religious homage to those objects, which had been deified by pagan superstition.

Similar observations are applicable to Plato. He spake in exalted language, of the Supreme God. (Eus. Præp. Ev. p. 262.) Yet he seems not to have considered him, as the object to which human beings were to direct their worship. (Anach. iv. 312, 313.) Accordingly *Eugubinus* employs a chapter, in assigning reasons, why Plato, in his treatise *de legibus*, prescribes the worship of inferior deities, such as the celestial luminaries, rather than the Supreme God; viz. that the latter is incomprehensible and not to be expressed in words.

Cicero, it is known, as well as Plato, has written *de legibus*. But the unity of god is no more recognized in the political institutions of the one than of the other. The Supreme God, is indeed named; but he is not exhibited as the object of worship. Polytheism, was to be the religion of his contemplated community; and the worship of human spirits was expressly required. *Divos, et eos, qui caelestes semper habiti, colunto: et illos, quos endo calo merita vocaverint, Herculem, Liberum, Æsculapium, Castorem, Pollucem, Quirinum.*

This is certainly a remarkable passage. Cicero either believed, that Hercules, Bacchus, Romulus, were gods, or he did not. And, so far as our present object is concerned, viz. to show how incompetent he was to teach the doctrines of religion, it is not very material, which of these suppositions is found to be true. In the one case, he was grossly, though sincerely an idolater; in the other, he enjoined on men, to worship, as gods, those, whom he knew to be entitled to no such honor.

Plotinus, a follower of Plato, speaks of Deity, in a manner, calculated rather to confound his readers, than to give them any distinct ideas of the Supreme Being. "Of the unity of God, saith he, nothing can be predicated, neither being, nor essence, nor life; because it is above all these."

It seems to have been no uncommon opinion among an-

cient philosophers, that anger could never be attributed to Deity. If by this they had meant only, that the divine nature is incapable of that mental agitation, implied in human anger, the sentiment, I suppose, would have been unexceptionable. They however considered it, as implying, that no sufferings were to be apprehended from the divine justice. Agreeably to this are the words of Seneca. *Deos nemo sanus timet. Furor est enim metuere salutaria.* No man, in the exercise of his reason, fears the gods. It is madness to fear that, which is salutary. Again, *Dei immortales nec volunt obesse, nec possunt.* The immortal gods have neither the inclination nor power to hurt any one. To the same purpose, in his ninety fifth epistle, he asserts, *Errat, si quis putat illos nocere velle. Non possunt. Nec accipere injuriam queant, nec facere.* He is in an error, who imagines, that the gods have a disposition to hurt any one. It is impossible. They can neither do nor receive an injury.

It is obvious, that such sentiments are consistent neither with truth, nor with the well being of mankind in the present state.

I. They are not true. God does not indeed possess either the weakness or passions of men. Yet are there some things, which he views with approbation, and others, which he views with displeasure. Nothing can be more reproachful to God, than to represent him indifferent to virtue and vice. But if he is *not* indifferent to these, his creatures will not be *treated*, as if he *were*. It is so far from being madness, therefore to *fear* God, i. e. to view him as the punisher of sin, as well as the bountiful rewarder of virtue, that no sentiments different from these, are worthy of God, or consistent with the reason of man.

But 2ndly, this opinion of *Seneca* is doubtless, in a very high degree, unfriendly to civil order, and good morals. If it be generally believed, that the Supreme Being has no disposition to punish vice, as well as to reward virtue, and that no evil from an avenging hand is to be apprehended by the offender, the most powerful restraints will be then removed

from human passions, and society will be a turbid ocean, on which the conflicting elements of our nature will mingle and rage in wild disorder.

Philosophy was an insufficient guide, as it respects that government, which the Supreme Being maintains over the world.

In the introduction to Cicero's treatise *de Natura Deorum*, he represents it as the great question, at issue among philosophers, whether the gods enjoy their existence in eternal leisure, regardless of human affairs; or whether, having created the world, they employ their power and wisdom in sustaining and governing it. The latter of these opinions is defended by *Balbus*, the stoick. It is ridiculed by the Epicurian *Velleius*; and is not treated with much more respect by *Cotta* the Academic, who appears to some readers, as speaking the sentiments of Cicero himself.

Tacitus, who lived when christianity had been for some time introduced, and who, for that reason, had better opportunity, than more ancient philosophers, to obtain correct views concerning divine providence, not only intimates his own doubts on the subject, but asserts, that "many of the wisest men, had this opinion fixed in their minds, that neither our beginning, nor our end, nor men at all, are regarded by the gods."

Pliny, the elder, represents it, as a thing ridiculous, to imagine, that the Supreme God should maintain a providence in human affairs. Pliny was not only an indefatigable student, but devoted his studies to natural philosophy. The works of God, whence arguments are drawn to prove his existence and attributes, were the object of his unwearied investigation. Still was he not convinced, that there is a God, who governs in the earth.

On this subject, it was remarked in the lecture on Divine Providence, that even those, among ancient philosophers, who were most decided as to the general doctrine, were not agreed. The Stoics firmly believed, and ably defended the doctrine; but did not all believe it in the same sense.

ety, they boldly avowed it, and taught it to others, though the passions, and prejudices, and interests of men, were combined for its suppression. Now, whether the christian religion be true or not, it cannot be denied, that its author and its early preachers acted, in this respect, conformably to the character, in which they appeared ; and with a courage, propriety, and dignity, to which we find nothing parallel in the conduct of ancient sages.

IV. A still further reason, why the philosophers were inadequate guides, was, that they enjoined on their disciples, even in religion, a rigid conformity to the laws of the country.

The first line in what are denominated the Golden Verses of Pythagoras, contained in the Collectanea Majora, is "Honour the gods, after the manner, which the law prescribes." Col. Maj. 312.

Socrates was certainly of the same opinion. In the former part of this lecture, it was shown, that he himself offered sacrifice after the manner of his country. From a dialogue between him and *Euthydemus*, preserved in the fourth book of *Xenophon's Memorabilia*, it appears, that whatever had been the prescribed worship, he would not have hesitated to comply with it. To this question, "Who is a pious man?" it is answered, "He, who worships the gods." It is subjoined, "May each one worship in the manner, he thinks best?" the response is, "No, but agreeably to the law, which directs, what ought to be done." (Xen. Op. 345. 308.)

Similar to this is the direction of Plato, as quoted by the Abbe Barthelemy. (Anach. iv. 253.) It is that the gods are to be worshipped in the manner prescribed by the laws ; assigning as a reason, that human wisdom is unable to arrive at any positive knowledge on the subject. "He blames those men, as putting impious notions into the heads of young persons, who taught them, that they ought not to look on those to be gods, whom the law required them to regard as such." He represents it, says Leland, as the duty and office of a le-

gislator to punish those, who do not believe the gods to be such as the law declares them to be. (Lel. i. 353.)

The same author informs us, that there are some remarkable passages, produced by Augustine, from a work of Seneca, now lost, in which he speaks with great freedom of the vulgar mythology. (Lel. i. 180.) "Speaking of the images of the gods, he finds fault with their giving them the forms and habits of men, wild beasts, fishes, and a mixture of sexes, and adds, "they call those gods, which, if they had life and breath, and a man should meet them unexpectedly, would pass for monsters. He exposes the cruel and lascivious rites, made use of in the worship of their deities. And yet declares, that a wise man will observe all these things, not indeed as acceptable to the gods, but as commanded by the laws."

Agreeably to this kind of casuistry, individuals were to make no use of their own intellects in judging of the manner, in which divine worship was to be performed; the whole would be under the direction of the civil magistrate; and what was enjoined in one country, would be condemned in another. At this rate, how would it have been possible, that the world should ever be reclaimed from the errors and absurdities of pagan mythology? Who was to reclaim them? The philosophers? But they referred the whole matter to the legislators. By whom then were the legislators to be reclaimed? The fact is, that this conduct of the philosophers did a *positive* injury. It did not merely leave things disordered as they were, but confirmed that disorder.

The philosophers proceeded a step further, if *Socrates* and *Plato* may be allowed to represent the rest. (Anach. iii. 113.) The reason, assigned by Plato, why, in his own republic, he prescribed nothing concerning the worship of the gods, is, says the author of the Travels of Anacharsis, that the regulation of that matter appertained to the Oracle at Delphi. And Xenophon represents Socrates, as encouraging Eythydemus, who was anxious to know, how he might make suitable returns to the gods, by reminding him, that the Oracle at Delphi, when consulted, as to what was acceptable to the

gods, gave this for an answer, "that they must be worshipped according to the law of the city." (Xen. Op. 342.)

It appears, therefore, that both these extraordinary men sanctioned, by their own authority, the Delphic imposture. Whether or not they considered the Oracle as an imposture, is to our present purpose, immaterial. The design and tendency of the Oracle was doubtless to favour and perpetuate the established religion. In proportion, as the oracles were regarded, the whole system of pagan superstition would gain strength and influence, and the chains of error would be riveted on the human mind. It is, I know, very possible to make a large collection of splendid sentences, weighty and sublime maxims, from the sages of antiquity: and from none more, I presume, than from Socrates, Plato, and Seneca. But can we deny, that what they built up with one hand, they demolished with the other? What availed their noblest speculations and sublimest rhapsodies, if, after all, the religion of human beings must be settled by the Delphic Oracle?

Lastly. We shall be able further to judge how far they were qualified to guide men in the affairs of religion, if we consider the lives of some, who professed philosophy, and the moral maxims transmitted to us in the writings of others. Hegesias, Anniceres, Theodorus, and Bion, were openly profligate. Arcesilaus and Lacydas died by excessive drinking. Not materially different from theirs was the character of Speusippus, who with Anniceres, placed all good in pleasure.

It was a doctrine of Theodorus, "that a man may, upon occasion, commit theft, adultery, or sacrilege, there being nothing in these naturally evil." (Stanley, 146.) Nor can philosophers of more illustrious name be exculpated from the charge of teaching pernicious moral maxims.

Socrates, as it is positively asserted by Salvian, recommended, *Uxorem propriam ut nullus habeat. Matrimonia enim cunctis debent esse communia.* (He lent his own wife Xantippe to Alcibiades. Pot. Gr. Ant. ii. 305.)

That community of wives, which Salvian tells us, was re-

commended by Socrates, was unquestionably permitted by Plato. He likewise allowed the exposure of feeble or deformed infants. Indeed the object of Plato seems much to have resembled that of Lycurgus ; it was to rear citizens and soldiers for the State, though at the expense of individual happiness and social affections. In the following direction, there is a brutal insensibility, which no parent will ever read without indignation. (Anach. iii. 105.) The children, which shall be born, shall be immediatly taken from their parents, and lodged in a place, to which their mother shall repair, without knowing them, to distribute, sometimes to one, and sometimes to another, that sustenance, which nature has provided for infants, and which they shall not be permitted to reserve exclusively for the fruit of their own affections."

By various quotations from this celebrated philosopher, it appears, that he permitted, and even on particular occasions, inculcated the violation of truth. (Lel. ii. 249.)

In that very beautiful piece of pagan morality, the oration of *Isocrates* to *Dominicus*, contained in *Collectanea Majora*, we find this most antichristian sentiment, "Be not surpassed by your friends, in doing them good ; or by your enemies, in doing them injuries." A similar precept is found among the *Memorabilia* of Socrates. (Xen. 319, 322.) I lay no stress on that charge of extreme impurity, which has been brought against this philosopher, by several authors of high reputation. The probability, if one may be permitted to give an opinion, on superficial view of evidence, is, that the accusation is groundless. But there is another charge of no inconsiderable nature, which rests on the authority of Xenophon, who was both his disciple and panegyrist : it is that of giving such advice, in presence of two of his disciples, to *Theodota*, a profligate woman of Athens, as must be severely condemned by every person, who is even slightly imbued with christian philosophy.

The subject before us might easily be treated at much greater length. We might here notice that remarkable passage



from Cicero, which was quoted in the last lecture. Those, who desire further information, may obtain it by consulting Stanley's Lives of the philosophers, or Enfield's Abridgment of Brucker's History of philosophy. Enough has been said, it is hoped, to show that the dark cloud of ignorance and error, which lowered over the nations, was not likely to be dispelled by human means. It has been shown, that the philosophers had no sufficient knowledge on the subjects of morality and religion, to direct mankind in the way of truth and salvation; and that even the light, which they did acquire by their superior talents and application, they took no pains to communicate; but by their own example confirmed the common people in belief of the current superstitions. But had the philosophers been much less deficient, than they were both in knowledge and in moral purity, they would still have been incompetent guides, as they could not have spoken with sufficient authority. Mankind were not in a condition to attend to a long train of reasoning in support of a new religious theory. Their slavish subordination to their vices and their passions, disqualified them for impartial inquiry, and rendered them averse from it. They needed evidence, addressed directly to their senses. They needed to hear the *dumb speak*, to see the *lame walk*, and the *dead rise*.

What would it be reasonable to expect, as to the contents of a revelation, made under such circumstances, and to such a world? Could it represent mankind, as fond of truth, and observant of moral rectitude? Or must it say, that they are *dead in trespasses and sins*? Could it represent them, as in need only of some improvement in virtue, such as would naturally result from importunate persuasion? Or must it plainly tell them of passing *from death unto life—from the power of Satan to God*: of being raised from the dead by the energy of Almighty grace? would it think, that enough were done, when the beauty and proportion of virtue were represented, and the deformity of vice portrayed? Or would it not rather speak of *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul of man, that worketh evil; but glory, honor, and peace to him, that worketh good*?

## LECTURE VII.

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### *Human Depravity.*

As it appears to be universally conceded among the advocates for revelation, that the advent of Jesus Christ had an important relation to the moral condition of man, it should seem, that the ascertaining of this moral condition well deserves our first inquiries.

Our views, as to our own characters, ought doubtless to correspond with truth. If guilty but of *slight* aberration, penitence and self abasement *may* rise to a degree, altogether disproportionate to our crimes. And persons ought to abstain from excess, as well in condemning, as in applauding themselves. On the other hand, if our disobedience is general, unyielding, and inveterate, our conviction and humility, it is evident, ought not to be superficial.

Besides the *effects*, which christianity ought to produce on the human character, will be very different in the two supposed cases. In the former, *all* reformation is not superseded; in the latter, *nothing* will be satisfactory, but a change that is radical and extensive; and whether the change is produced by ourselves, or *ab extra*, the force to be applied, so to speak, must be in the two cases, very different.

As all sin is a transgression of *law*, it is impossible to form any correct estimate of the demerit and the extent of *sin* in any supposed instance, without having just thought, as to the extent of what the law requires. By the term *law* I do not mean the Mosaic law, or any *particular* establishment, human or divine; but that *eternal, immutable* rule of rectitude, *conformity* to which the Almighty demands of all his intelligent offspring. This law results necessarily from the *nature* and *relations* of things, and not merely from the *will* of any being whatever; i. e. while things exist, as they are; while there is a God of such attributes; and while He has creatures in such and such conditions, it is impossible, but that certain feelings and actions on the part of these creatures should be suitable, and those which are opposite, unsuitable. Under given circumstances, the will of no being can change *right* into *wrong*, or *wrong* into *right*.

This immutable law, to which the Almighty requires his creatures to conform, takes cognizance, not of overt actions alone, which are only modifications of sound or motion; but regards these, together with the purpose and choice of intelligent creatures. We are not unfrequently led to entertain wrong opinions of the divine law, by our views of civil legislation. If a man offers no injury to the State or to individuals; if he contributes his part to the support of the *one*, and discharges his *debts* to the *other*, he is, in the estimation of civil law, an upright man. The law requires nothing, which he refuses to yield. Whether in discharging his debts, or in supporting, and defending the State, he is actuated by regard to personal convenience and aggrandizement, or by a generous love to public happiness, is a matter concerning which human laws make no inquiry.

Hence, we readily believe it to be no difficult matter to satisfy the demands of God. While our fellow men receive from us little injury, and some benefit; while the name of our Maker is not blasphemed, nor mentioned contemptuously, we scarcely imagine, that the justice of God can have any further demands.

In the true spirit of such reasoning, the Pharisee said, "*I thank God, I am not as other men are : I fast twice a week ; I pay tithes of all that I possess.*" Under the influence of the same mistake, though perhaps not with an equal degree of pride and self complacency, the young nobleman, when different parts of the law were brought to his recollection, replied, "*All these things have I kept from my youth.*"

Now, it is extremely evident, that if there is a fitness in actions, there is prior fitness in dispositions and feelings.

It is suitable, that I should, by my countenance, tone of voice, words, and actions, express gratitude to a friend, who has saved my life at the hazard of his own, it is previously suitable that I should feel gratitude. This is, indeed, comprehended in the phraseology ; for strictly speaking, I cannot express my gratitude, if I have no gratitude to express. If there is an acknowledged propriety in certain words and actions, relating to Deity and our fellow men, it is because there is a previous propriety in those dispositions, of which these words and actions are the sign. No parent is satisfied with the attention and caresses of a child, if he does not consider them, as the sign of an affectionate temper. It is this which causes pleasure to thrill through the heart, and glitter in the eyes. Let the professions of a person be what they may, and let his actions, by which you are benefitted, be ever so numerous, your gratitude inevitably ceases, the moment you are ascertained, that his views are exclusively fixed on his own emolument. The case is not different in regard to our Creator. His law takes cognizance of the taste, desires, and purposes of men ; a moral corruption is to be estimated by the agreement, which there is between the former and the latter. So far as men pursue those objects, which God and reason approve, they are innocent or virtuous. So far as they pursue different ends, they are sinful. It is a maxim, taken from the morals of Aristotle, that many actions, which seem worthy of commendation, lose all their value, when we investigate the principle that produced them,

You will easily perceive, I imagine, that in regard to what has just been mentioned, the divine requirements could not be less than they are. It can hardly be said, after a moments reflection, that external actions alone ought to be matter of retribution; or that God, as a wise Governor and Judge, ought to suffer to pass unnoticed, the selfishness, pride, revenge, or malignity of his creatures, even should those qualities never be exhibited to the view of men. Such a retribution as this, would be perfectly irreconcilable with our best ideas of the Supreme Being. That account which Deity gives of himself, is such, therefore, as to obtain the full approbation of human reason, "*I the Lord, search the hearts : I try the reins of the children of men, to give to every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*"

It is next to be inquired, whether the divine law is, in its application, *general* or *particular*. Are we bound to subject our feelings to this law on great occasions only, or at every moment of a rational existence? On this question as well as on the preceding, human reason will give a right decision. Where there is a right and a wrong, whether the occasion is more or less important, it is most evident, that the right is to be pursued, and the wrong rejected. Obliquity is essentially different from rectitude. Whether an offence is small or great, its nature is the same. If, therefore a small variation were allowed, a great one could not consistently be punished. I should be perfectly confident, in appealing to any person of judgment and reflection, whether he could view his Creator with undiminished respect and reverence, were it ascertained, that although the divine law prohibited perverseness of disposition and feeling, when carried to a high degree, the same perverseness when existing in a lower degree, escaped its cognizance? Is it possible, that a perfect God, and a perfect law, should allow any, even the smallest degree of ingratitude, envy, or malignity? Is it possible that such a Being, and such a law, should not condemn every want of the opposite quali-

lies? "*All rational* creatures, says Dr. Clark, whose wills are not *constantly* and *regularly* determined, and their actions governed by right reason, and the necessary differences of good and evil, according to the eternal and invariable rules of justice, equity, goodness, and truth; but suffer themselves to be swayed by unaccountable, arbitrary, humorous, and rash passions; by lusts, vanity, and pride; by private interest, or present sensual gratification: These, setting up their own unreasonable self will, in opposition to the nature and reason of things, endeavor, as much as in them lies, to make things be what they are not, and cannot be: which is the highest presumption and greatest insolence imaginable: It is acting contrary to that reason and judgment, which God has implanted in their natures, on purpose to enable them to discern the difference between good and evil. It is attempting to destroy the order by which the Universe subsists. It is offering the highest imaginable affront to the Creator of all things." (Nat. and Rev. Rel. p. 51.)

No law could be reasonable and consistent, which did not require perfect obedience. On the same ground, on which we are required to abstain from any sin, we are required to abstain from all. Our depravity and guilt are therefore in direct proportion to our moral imperfection.

The justice and propriety of so much strictness, in regard to *innocent* beings, the progenitors of our race, for instance, before their apostacy, will not perhaps, be questioned: but is no allowance to be made, you inquire, for creatures, frail as we are at present, and surrounded by temptations? I answer, if strong passions, and what is called *frailty*, destroys moral agency, and renders us incapable of doing either right or wrong, it must be granted, that we are not subjects of retribution. But, by the term *frailty*, the objector *would* probably mean, either strong temptations, or an inherent propensity to sin. As to the first, if actions are innocent, merely because there are temptations to perform them, it is doubtful, whether there is any sin in the

world. On this ground, the first transgressors might have pleaded innocence. To comply with temptation is either right, or it is not. Compliance with temptation to do a wrong action, cannot be right; but if such compliance be wrong, it is justly punishable.

If the term *frailty* is used in the other sense, to signify inherent propensity to evil, such propensity is doubtless criminal, and exposes the transgressor to the displeasure of God. We should not excuse a man guilty of robbery, were he to tell us, that he had long possessed peculiar fondness for a life of plunder; nor an incendiary, should he plead inveterate malignity.

The truth is, there can be but one law for the good and the bad: and that law must require universal rectitude. "*All rational beings*, says the writer already quoted, *ought, i. e. are obliged to take care that their wills and actions be constantly determined and governed by the eternal rule of right and equity.*"

"Perhaps it will be demanded, says Mr. Locke, why did God give so hard a law to mankind, that, to the apostles time no one of Adam's issue had kept it? To which he answers, It was such a law, as the purity of God's nature required, and must be the law of such a creature, as man, unless God would have made him a rational creature, and not required him to have lived by the law of reason, but would have countenanced in him, irregularity and disobedience to that light, which he had, and that rule, which was suitable to his nature; which would have been, to have authorized disorder, confusion, and wickedness in his creatures. For this law was the law of reason, or of nature: and if rational creatures will not live up to the rule of their reason, who shall excuse them? If you will admit them to forsake reason in one point, why not in another? Where will you stop? To disobey God, in any part of his commands, (and it is he that commands what reason does,) is direct rebellion, which if dispensed with in any point, government and order are at an end, and there can be no bounds set to the lawless

exorbitancy of unconfined men. The law, therefore, was, as St. Paul tells us, holy, just, and good, and such that it *could not*, and *ought not* to be otherwise."

Perhaps it may still be necessary to make some observations on the criminality of negative qualities. It is implied in some of the preceding remarks, that the law condemns not only dispositions, which are positively wrong, such as hatred, cruelty, &c. but likewise the want of benevolence, and compassion. If this should be apprehended, at first, unjust or improper, the error will be corrected by a little attention to scripture, and to what passes in common life. *A certain man, our Savior tells us, as he journeyed from Jerusalem to Jericho, fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment and left him wounded.* A priest and a levite came in sight of the sufferer, and passed by without relieving him. But why is this circumstance mentioned? Was it to their praise or dishonor? To the latter no doubt. They were criminal. But for what? Not for doing any positive injury to the unfortunate man; but for omitting to give him relief. No one will doubt, that they were criminal, and justly liable to punishment for the want of that benevolence, which they ought to have felt. In the xxvth chap. of Matt. Christ has briefly described the process of the last judgment; and exhibited the charges, on which, those on his left hand, will be condemned.

These charges, it is remarkable, relate not to positive offences, but to the neglect of duty. *I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me not in : naked, and ye clothed me not : sick and in prison, and ye visited me not.*

We are not to conclude from this passage of scripture, that negative qualities, or the want of right dispositions and actions will be the exclusive ground of condemnation : but surely, unless these were to be taken into the account, such a representation as that, which has been cited, would not have been made. Nor is the sentiment here conveyed, discordant with opinions, most commonly received. Should a per-



son know, that an incendiary designed to fire a town, on such a night, and yet give no information to the inhabitants, the public opinion would scarcely be less unfavourable concerning him, than concerning the incendiary himself. He, who conceals a plot against the State, is punished by human laws, for misprision of treason.

Let it not be considered, therefore, as arbitrary or severe, that the divine law condemns defects, as well as positive offences. We could scarcely find a person, who would *deliberately* deny the criminality of being indifferent to God, and the happiness of his creatures. It has now been shown, I conceive, that every action of man ; that every intention and desire ; and that every defect in devotion, gratitude, kindness and purity, is just matter of punishment. If it is not so, the contrary may be shown : but if it is so, to complain of the extent and preciseness of divine requisitions, will be worse than useless. If reason approves the divine law, it is unreasonable to complain.

The way is now prepared to make some direct inquiries, as to the human character. If the law has been correctly stated, nothing remains, but to apply it to human feelings and actions. That there is universally prevailing some degree of departure from this law ; that there neither is, nor has been any person on earth, living to years of discernment, by whom the reasonable requirements of God have not been violated, in a degree, greater or less, is what may, without any impropriety, be taken for granted. For, although we sometimes hear persons mentioned, as perfectly innocent, and perfectly pure, the language is evidently the result either of passion or levity ; and the person using it, when called upon, will hardly essay to make any defence. It is evidently true, then, as the scriptures declares, *that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* Therefore, whatever be the penalties of the divine law, all are exposed to them.

- If there is any difficulty in admitting this conclusion, you will consider, that to the determination of the general ques-

tion of a man's innocence or guilt, it is not necessary to ascertain the *degree*, to which he has violated the law. That may be necessary to a right apportioning of punishment, but not to a decision, that punishment is due. If I have walked uprightly in ninety nine instances, and perversely in one, it is as *true*, that the law is *broken*, as if the *instances of perverseness* were more *numerous*; though the merited punishment is less. There are, in our civil code, laws against murder, robbery, theft, and forgery. Should a man be indicted for the last crime, and brought to trial, it would avail nothing to plead, that the crime had been committed but once. Nothing more than that is contained in the indictment. It does not set forth, that the crime has been repeated. Nor does the law declare, that forgery, is no crime, *unless* repeated. One act of the kind renders a man liable to condemnation. So, if a person commit robbery on the highway, it will avail nothing to plead, that he has suffered a hundred persons to pass without injury.

It being conceded, that all have sinned in some instances, let those instances be ever so few, it is no less certain, that all are justly condemned; it being always understood, that *punishment, following* condemnation, will be proportionate to the degree of guilt.

Let us now inquire, whether the quantity of human guilt be small.

Perhaps there is no crime, which finds fewer advocates than ingratitude. Persons accused of this, may *deny* the *charge*; but they never attempt to justify the *disposition*. They never say, that there is no obliquity and demerit, in being unmindful of benefits. If a moral fitness is discernable on *any* occasion, it is so on an occasion of favours *bestowed* and *received*. In proportion to these favours is the degree of demerit attached to ingratitude. Agreeable to this, is the sentence, so often quoted from Publius Syrus, *Omne dixeris maledictum, quum ingratum hominem dixeris*.

With what feelings do we receive and enjoy favors bestowed by our Creator? Our dependence on him is abso-

lute and universal. Existence is not more truly his gift, than are all those objects, which render existence valuable. To his munificence are we indebted for intellectual powers, and the means of their cultivation—for the sustenance daily provided;—for the enjoyments, derived from the active and varying scenes of the day, and, from the rest and tranquillity of the night. His gift are the relations and friends, whom we love, and from whose affection to us, so considerable a part of the joy of life is derived. His are the showers, which moisten, and the sun, which warms the earth. From Him are the pleasure and animation of spring, and the riches of harvest—all, that satisfies the appetite, supports or restores the animal system, gratifies the ear, or charms the eye. With what emotions, let it be asked, are all these objects viewed, and these blessings enjoyed? Is it the habit of man to acknowledge God in his works, and to attribute all the pleasures and security of life to the Creator's munificence? Possession and prosperity are enjoyed, not as a gift to the undeserving; but as the result of chance or good fortune, or as the merited reward of our own prudence and effort. Were gratitude a trait in the human character, it would be proportionate to obligation; and where much is received, much would be acknowledged. In this case, the liveliest sense of obligation would be exhibited among the *wealthy*, and those whose prosperity had been long and uninterrupted. But do facts correspond with this supposition? Are God, his providence, and bounty most sensibly and devoutly acknowledged by you, who feel *no want*, and are *tried with no adversity*? The truth is, our sense of *obligations* usually diminishes in proportion to the greatness and duration of blessings bestowed. A long course of prosperity renders us the more insensible and irreligious.

But, on no subject is human ingratitude so remarkably apparent, as in regard to the christian religion. I speak not of those, who reject; but of those, who believe christianity; and who, of course, believe that *God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him, might*

*wish.* Search all the records of every era and nation; through the works of God, so far as they are open to inspection, and you find nothing, which equally displays the riches of divine mercy. The son of God died to culprits from merited condemnation. But is this subcontemplated with interest, with joy, with astonishment? viewed with the most frigid indifference, or heart-felt tance. The human mind, far from considering this, as a right subject, flies from it, when occasionally presented. What inference are we to make from this circumstance? The conclusion is that, to which reason impels us? for we receive gratuitous concessions. We ask you to entertain no notions in theology, but such as are supported, and such, if things considered, it would be irrational to deny. Ingratitude is universally allowed to imply baseness—moral pollution. Ingratitude towards God cannot, in its nature, be less criminal, than ingratitude to men. Our ingratitude towards our Maker is undeniably clear, and astonishingly

We are therefore chargeable with a high degree of guilt and ill desert.

## LECTURE VIII.

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### *Human Depravity.*

So far, as moral corruption is evinced by ingratitude, flagrant and long continued, the existence of such corruption in our species has been shown. The conclusion rests on this ground. 1. That ingratitude is a crime; and, 2. That men are ungrateful to the Supreme Being. If neither of these propositions is questionable, the conclusion is not to be resisted. If the want of grateful feelings is *highly* criminal; if it betrays *peculiar* baseness of temper; and if, at the same time, great munificence is exercised on the part of Deity, the amount of human demerit is not inconsiderable.

We will now attend to another argument. As in the material world the nature of different substances is known by their affinities; so, by its objects of affection and aversion, we ascertain moral character. Let it be known, with persons of what character a man is most fond of associating, and you find no difficulty in determining his own. Attachment to profligate characters, indicates profligacy. Attachment to the virtuous and upright, indicates purity of mind. Should there be in any town, or village, a person of unusual suavity of temper, benevolence of design, and universal correctness of behaviour; whose knowledge and discernment always selected the most suitable seasons and objects for the exercise of his benevolence, would it not follow, that his

neighbours were extremely deficient in taste and good feelings, if they were not disposed to seek his society, and to consult his judgment? would indifference as to *his* moral character leave us in any doubt as to *theirs*? The conclusion would be more obvious still, if the person contemplated were known to be easy of access, conciliatory in his manners, and habituated to express his mind in terms, which, all things considered, were most appropriate. Now there is, present with every person, a being, whose character is similar to that described, but, in degree, infinitely superior.

There is a being, whose knowledge of every subject is perfect, and whose decisions are infallible: a being, who interests himself in our situation, and is disposed to impart counsel, and communicate relief: whose benevolence is greater, than human language can describe, or human intellects conceive. He has never refused a favor, when goodness and wisdom required its bestowment; and, far from being inaccessible, he has invited mankind to express to him their situation and desires.

Now, if it can be shown, either that mankind have no love for this divine being, or that they love him in a very low degree, it will follow, that they have a perverse, or depraved taste. That He, in whose character are united the most glorious attributes in the highest possible degree, should not be an object of affection and veneration to creatures of correct moral feelings, is a supposition perfectly absurd.

Could it be proved, that our race in general, though not entirely destitute of love to God, possess this quality but in a low degree; a degree altogether disproportionate to their ability of comprehending his perfections; the *existence* of moral corruption would be no less certain; though its *amount* would be smaller.

But how, you inquire, does it appear, that there is in mankind generally, this deficiency of love to their Maker? I answer, that this is evident by their not exhibiting those marks of the contrary, which they certainly would exhibit, if such deficiency did not exist.

I. From the situation of man, his imbecility, his dependence, and want of knowledge, it would be obviously the dictate of reason, to maintain constant and devoted intercourse with his Maker. Our condition clearly indicates the propriety of such intercourse; and previously to observation, it would be thought, that the liberty of resorting to the Almighty, would be contemplated with the highest joy, and improved, as the richest privilege. How little such an opinion corresponds with fact, you need not be informed. Though we cannot live insensible of our wants, feebleness, and immortality, there is no prevailing disposition in the human heart to place confidence in God. Men do not love to view themselves, as surrounded by their Creator's presence. They do not rejoice at the return of seasons devoted to prayer. Nay, it is the general character of men to cast off fear, and to *restrain* prayer before God. If the fear of temporal or eternal sufferings, occasionally urges them to this exercise, it is evidently not in itself agreeable to their dispositions. It is a service, submitted to,—rather endured, than relished. If this is doubted, let us reflect on what passes in our own hearts; let us observe the general appearance of indevotion among others; and in many, the entire neglect of religious acknowledgement.

II. Did we entertain right feelings towards God, a love, proportionate to our powers of comprehending his moral character; such feelings would be manifested by the frequency and the manner of our conversation on the subject. We are universally fond of conversing concerning those whom we love: nor is there any difficulty in discovering our sentiments, by the *interest* which we take, when their characters are discussed. Were it inquired, whether an intimate and warm friendship subsisted between a particular person and yourself, any one would justly think himself authorized to answer in the negative, if, after much acquaintance, he had observed, that you were not in the habit of mentioning the name of this person; or if you discovered no interest, whenever such mention was made by others. If there are circum-

stances, in which this conclusion would be incorrect, they are such as do not exist in regard to Deity.

Now, of the great variety of subjects, which occur in social intercourse, do the attributes, providence, and requirements of God, hold a conspicuous place? If conversation of this kind is commenced, is it maintained with a general and lively interest; and do the countenances of those present evince their delight in the occurrence of such a theme? The experiment is indeed but sparingly made: but when it is, there is great uniformity in the result. Now on what principle can we account for this fact? Will it be said, that we are afraid of desecrating things sacred? and that the reluctance to speak of our Maker, really proceeds from the high veneration, in which He is held? How happens it then, that those, who, on all other occasions, manifest most tenderness of conscience, and devout regard for the divine honor, should be less delicate in this particular instance, than others, whose usual deportment is that of indifference, or irreligion? How happens it, that all the reverence for Deity should in this instance, be on the side of those, who evince it in no other? For though it is unquestionably true, that hypocrites, or fanatics, may ostentatiously speak of religion, and equally true that some pious persons may be less able, or disposed, than some others of the same character, to introduce and support religious conversation; it will not be denied, that discourse of this kind is, in general, most acceptable to persons of piety; and least so to those of an opposite character.

In relation to many subjects, it may be said, that they cannot be universally acceptable, on account of the different habits, studies, and capacities of those present. That which is interesting to a student, may not be so to a man in commercial, or military life. But the character and commands of God are of equal concern to all human beings. With these are connected the immortal interests of men.

Now, if indifference to that discourse, of which our Creator is the subject, or even aversion from it, betrays a want of affection from his character; the same indifference, or aver-



sion, under our *peculiar circumstances*, so interested, as we are in this subject, so dependent on God for present and future happiness, affords proof of the same melancholy fact, still more strong, and as it should seem, irresistible.

For reasons, already stated, the human mind ought to receive its highest pleasures from divine contemplation. To intelligent creatures of correct moral feelings, God is, of all objects, most amiable, splendid, and majestic. Reason dictates, that our attention to objects, should be in proportion to their magnitude, and that our love should be proportionate to their moral excellence. Observation and experience show, that the mind recurs to objects, in proportion to the love, which it entertains for them. Let it then be inquired whether Deity is generally an object of joyful, and frequent contemplation. Is it a trait in the character of mankind, that they receive the highest pleasure in viewing the independence, omnipresence, power, purity, and happiness of God their Creator? On a favorite subject, there is no difficulty in fixing the attention; the difficulty is rather in abstracting our thoughts from it. In the present case it will not be denied, I apprehend, that all the difficulty is of the former kind.

Another argument to prove the want of love to the Supreme Being, may be deduced from our disregard to his honour and felicity.

It may appear, perhaps, at first view, that considering the independence and majesty of God, we may well be excused from any solicitude on this subject. It is true indeed, that the happiness of God is immutable, and he will secure his own honour: but this does not render it suitable for his creatures to be indifferent to either. If you are cordially attached to the character and interests of a personage, ever so elevated, you do not witness, without emotion, contempt for his opinions and commands, or obloquy, attached to his name. As to the felicity of God, it *must* be a matter of joy to the upright in heart. We are never indifferent to the happiness of those, for whom we entertain affection. If, therefore, we find no consolation in the thought, that the

most perfect being in the Universe, is completely and permanently happy, it follows either, that we are criminally deficient in love to God, or perfectly destitute of that quality.

It being proved, that there is, in mankind, a great deficiency of love to God, by their not exhibiting those marks of the contrary, which they certainly would exhibit, did no such deficiency exist; it cannot be denied, that mankind are extensively and deeply depraved. For if perversion of taste; if obliquity of character is not proved by universal disinclination to an employment, the most rational and advantageous, such as that of addressing the Supreme Being; and by indifference to the most perfect character in the Universe, it will not, I think, be easy to define moral depravity, nor even to imagine facts or circumstances, by which its existence might be proved. If this argument prove *any* degree of moral disorder, it proves, that such disorder must be extremely great: for there is amazing defect of character, there is baseness, in viewing, either with disgust or indifference, the most splendid and perfect assemblage of moral attributes.

Let us now inquire, what testimony, as to the morality of the human character, is borne by events, usually occurring, in a country of civilization and religious knowledge. I do not ask for any evidence of perfection, or innocence. Claims of this kind will not be urged in behalf either of ourselves or others; but I ask, whether there is not evidence of *strong* inveterate propensity to evil? That men show the *want* of right feelings towards their Maker, is comparatively little. They manifest open contempt for their Creator by violating his commands.

I need not here mention those innumerable acts of dishonesty and perfidy, which all civil restraints, in addition to moral motives, are unable to prevent. I need not mention that intemperance and sensuality, which are as certainly pernicious to sound intellects, to character, and present interest, as they are to the eternal salvation of their votaries. I need not remind you of the facility, with which both the

young and the old acquire habits of blaspheming the divine name, and of mingling, in vulgar intercourse, language the most trifling and the most tremendous. It is impossible, while the present subject is in hand, that considerations of this kind should not spontaneously present themselves. But in addition to this, we cannot avoid the general conclusion, that one object concentrates human anxiety and effort, viz. the present world. Associate with persons of every age, and of various ranks : hear the conversation of the indolent and the active ; the illustrious and the obscure ; the hardy, unlettered labourer, who subdues the wilderness, and the votaries of refinement and science ; carry with you in the excursion as much charity and candor, as may consist with sound judgment ; and then, return, if possible, with this conclusion, that the object of man is, at once the most rational and honourable, viz. to resemble his Creator, and to secure salvation : or rather, avoid, if possible, the opposite conclusion, that man has forgotten his origin and high destiny, and is absorbed in self, and present existence.

There is a youth, let it be supposed, who is heir to an extensive empire ; into the possession and government of which he is to enter, if qualified, at the age of twenty. With this prospect before him, and with the best means of improvement, he cannot be induced to prosecute those studies, and acquire those habits and qualifications, which are necessary to his future station. He cannot be made to look with interest, on the empire, which he is to govern ; but is invincibly averse from that kind of education, which is indispensable to a person of his distinguished rank. In the mean time, he is absorbed in pursuits, the most trifling, sottish, and ignoble. If all efforts, long continued, were insufficient to raise his mind, and give a new direction to his pursuits, no one would hesitate to conclude, that there was a radical defect, a baseness of spirit. If a thousand, or a million youth, could be supposed in similar circumstances, manifesting the same disposition, the like conclusion would be formed in regard to them all.

But if the general appearance of things, in a civilized and christian country is such, as forces us to conclude, that human attention and efforts are centered on that part of existence, which is now present, while the eternity of a future life and retribution is universally believed; must we not conclude, with equal certainty, that there is in man a strong indisposition to the cultivation of those habits, which are essential to future happiness and glory? As these habits are those of moral rectitude, the conclusion is, that moral rectitude is that, to which man is strongly disinclined.

That this argument may be more distinctly considered, we will enumerate some of the restraints, in opposition to which crimes are committed; viz. the restraints of parents and guardians, the restraints of civil authority, and those of religion.

I. The restraints of parents and guardians. I am not speaking of infancy, or of an age, so little removed from it, as to preclude the free use of intellectual powers. It is generally allowed, in the case supposed, that authority is under the influence of affection and good design. Youth themselves, will, in few instances, deliberately deny, that the restraints, which parental authority imposes, are intended to promote their permanent advantage. Why then should numberless arts be resorted to, with design, that these restraints may be evaded? Why should the child cherish any desires to counteract a government, which has for its object, his own felicity? What a monstrous victory is that, which is gained over the efforts of parental wisdom, guided by unremitting good will and tenderness? What language would this be in the mouth of a son; "I know, that my parents love me cordially; and are continually anxious for my reputation, virtue, and happiness: but they shall not be gratified. I have the pleasure of reflecting that my efforts to render their designs abortive have been crowned with no inconsiderable success!" O! tis the triumph of the maniac, who slips the halter to his neck, and strangles himself, in spite of his keepers!

II. Let us next consider, against what restraints of a civil nature crimes are committed. Civil government itself is little more, than an institution for preventing mankind from doing injury to others and themselves. The whole criminal code, and a great part of civil restrictions, have their origin in the corruption of man. But for this, their necessity and use would be superseded. It would not be easy to enumerate the expedients, to which legislators have resorted, nor the various penalties, by which their laws have been sanctioned. I need not mention public infamy, disfranchisement, bodily mutilation, pillories, posts, imprisonment, the axe, the gallows, and the gibbet. Yet this whole ghastly assemblage of terrors is inadequate to the suppression of crimes. Theft, forgeries, violations of contracts the most sacred, robberies, and assassinations are not exterminated.

Now, must not the disposition to evil be inveterate and violent, if it operate in defiance of all these obstacles? But though the restraints, already enumerated, cannot be considered but as strong dissuasives from vice, and though we cannot but consider their inefficacy, as proving a very high degree of moral depravity; there are other restraints, the neglect of which affords evidence, still more clear and convincing. I mean the restraints of religion.

Extremely pertinent to the present purpose are the words of Mr. Locke, which I am not deterred from using by the consideration of their having been quoted by a writer on this subject. "Were the will determined by the views of good, as it appears, in contemplation, greater or less to the understanding, it could never get loose from the infinite, eternal joys of heaven, once proposed and considered as possible; the eternal condition of a future state infinitely outweighing the expectation of riches and honour, or any other worldly pleasure, which we can propose to ourselves; though we should grant these the more probable to be obtained. He, that will not be so far a rational creature, as to reflect seriously on infinite happiness and misery, must needs condemn himself, as not making that use of his understand-

ing, which he should. The rewards and punishments of another life, which the Almighty has established, as the enforcements of his laws, are of weight enough to determine the choice, against whatever of pleasure or pain this life can show. When the eternal state is considered, but in its bare possibility, which nobody can make doubt of, he, that will allow exquisit and endless happiness to be but the possible consequence of a good life here, and the contrary state the possible reward of a bad one, must own himself to judge very much amiss, if he does not conclude, that a virtuous life, with the certain expectation of everlasting bliss, which may come, is to be preferred to a vicious one, with the fear of that dreadful state of misery, which, it is very possible, may overtake the guilty, or, at least, the terrible, uncertain hope of annihilation. This is so evidently so, that though the virtuous life here had nothing but pain, and the vicious continued pleasure, which yet for the most part, is quite otherwise, and wicked men have not much the odds to boast of, even in their present possession; nay, all things rightly considered, have, I think, even the worst part here. But, when infinite happiness is put in one scale, against infinite misery in the other: if the worst, that comes to the pious man, if he mistakes, be the best, which the wicked man can attain to, if he be right, who can, without madness, run the venture? who, in his wits, would choose to come within the possibility of infinite misery? which, if he miss, there is still nothing to be got by the hazard. Whereas, on the other side, the sober man ventures nothing against infinite happiness to be got, if his expectation comes to pass."

Thus, does this profound reasoner show the extreme irrationality of neglecting religion, even though there were but a bare possibility of its truth. The case will be incomparably stronger, if we consider, that what is here supposed only possible, is generally believed in christian countries: I mean, that future rewards and punishments are interminable. All the infringements of moral rectitude, all the neglect of moral obligation, which occur in christian coun-

tries, take place in contempt of endless sufferings, and of endless pleasures. These are the restraints, against which crimes are perpetrated. Besides, it is a fact, perfectly beyond contradiction, that most persons, under the circumstances supposed, in full belief of eternal retributions, have either never felt sufficient anxiety to institute an investigation of their own moral characters, or else maintain an irreligious life, without even doubting their exposure to endless punishment.

Here, I would ask again, whether religion, which is only agreement with the dictates of sound reason, must not be an object of our fixed aversion, if, under such circumstances; in opposition to such motives, we perseveringly reject it? How is it possible to account for facts undeniable and without number, unless we suppose a very strong propensity to evil?

It will be replied, perhaps, that though the motives to a religious life, are indeed extremely forcible, they do not come into contact with the mind. Considerations of a religious nature are forgotten among innumerable objects of sense.

I answer, that the superiority of weight in religious motives, infinitely overbalances any advantage, which the other may have merely on the score of proximity. Besides, how distant is that change in our existence, which brings us to the commencement of a retribution? In truth, the ground is perpetually opening for some new deposit. Mortality is common: and the transition of not a few, is instantaneous. By these providences, by the most urgent solicitations of inspired eloquence, and by the commanding remonstrances of Deity himself, the motives of religion are brought into contact with the mind: and it can scarcely be conceived, that they should be presented under circumstances, more favourable to their influence.

## LECTURE IX.

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### *Human Depravity.*

It will probably not be denied, that the arguments, already used, prove no inconsiderable degree of depravity in those, to whom they apply. But whatever moral disorder exists among ourselves, or among those, who are best known to us, we are not hence to conclude, that all men are equally criminal. The present state of *our country* does not indicate the *present* moral character of other nations ; much less does it indicate their morality in past ages.

To these remarks I offer no objection. On the other hand, those, who make them, will not deny, that if the moral character of other countries and other ages be found as bad, or worse than our own, whatever legitimate conclusions have already been drawn, may be fairly extended to the species in general.

A very high degree of moral corruption has been proved by our flagrant ingratitude to the Most High ; by our indisposition to hold communion with him, in exercises of devotion ; by our reluctance to contemplate his perfections and relation to us ; by the infrequency of religious conversation ; by the little interest and pleasure, which it excites ; by the universal, and almost exclusive attention, bestowed on present existence ; and by the maintenance of a vicious life in opposition to motives of eternal consequence.

Do not all these facts exist in those nations, whose mor-



The resemblance between the ancient Scythians and the American natives, has often, and with good reason, been remarked. Among both, we notice the same horrible ferocity.

In treating the present subject, we are under the necessity of referring to some facts, which were formerly mentioned, in showing the necessity of divine revelation. "Among the Mexicans, human sacrifices were deemed most acceptable, and every captive, taken in war, was cruelly tortured and sacrificed. The heart and head were the portion of the gods; while the body was resigned to the captor, who, with his friends, feasted upon it."

The latest accounts of the Islanders in the South Sea, give us most unfavorable ideas of the moral character. The custom of offering human victims is common. Nor will the mind, disgusted with this view of barbarian depravity, obtain any relief, by resorting to the islands of Asia. The inhabitants of the vast island, or rather continent of New Holland, are in the most deplorable state of ignorance and vice. In some of their ceremonies, the very form and character of man seems despised, and the superiority of brutes acknowledged. The New Zealanders treat their captives, as did the Mexicans, i. e. they devour them. Surely it is not among savage nations, that we are to look for proofs of innocence, or facts, which will enfeeble the conclusion, formerly drawn, as to the human character, from appearances exhibited in our own country. "We find that both the ancient and modern history of the east," says a learned author, "is a continued scene of bloodshed and treachery."

As little should we be under the necessity of altering our former conclusion, were we to consider, what the state of morals has been at those periods, which are most distinguished for civilization, refinement, and literature. When Pericles was increasing the taste and refinement of the Athenians, he was corrupting their morals. As to Roman morality at that era in their history, which produced some of the most extraordinary efforts of the human mind, we have full satisfaction from the testimony of those, who were eye witnesses,

On this subject, poets and historians perfectly coincide. It is really no easy matter, even for a person not ignorant of the vices, prevailing in our own country, to conceive that astonishing variety of appearance, which Roman depravity assumed. Whatever of selfishness, cruelty, revenge, prodigality, gluttony, and lust, the boldest imagination is able to conceive, was practised among that people, whose power gave law to all nations, and whose literary productions still excite the admiration of all.

It is evident then, that neither the simplicity of savage life, nor the highest literary cultivation, is sufficient to prevent communities of human beings from plunging into the grossest pollution.

II. The character of man appears to have been extremely vicious under various degrees of religious light. What little knowledge, we have of the first ages of the world, is obtained from the sacred scriptures. We may consider the patriarchal age, as extending from the creation, to the time, when the Israelites emigrated from Egypt. During this period, there was no standing revelation. Divine interpositions were however, occasionally made : and that light, which was conveyed to individuals, must, in a greater or less degree, have been diffused.

In the family of Adam, was committed a murder, most unnatural and impious. A brother slew a brother, because the latter had received testimony of the divine approbation ; or, in the words of St. John, *because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous*. This individual act of violence does indeed prove nothing with certainty, but the character of its author. But that a crime, so atrocious, should have been committed at so early a period, when but a few individuals existed, and when there was almost no possibility of being injured by example, is a fact, which well deserves our consideration, while making inquiries as to the character of man.

The next prominent fact, which arrests our attention, in reading the early history of our race, is more clearly to our

present purpose. When about sixteen centuries had expired, the vices of men became so enormous and general, as to call for exemplary punishment. The universality of the evil, merits particular notice. It was not a few individuals, who rendered themselves conspicuous by daring offences. Corruption pervaded the whole mass. "*God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually. For all flesh had corrupted his way. The Lord said to Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me, for the whole earth is filled with violence through them: behold, I will destroy them with the earth.*" The divine forbearance was exhausted, and the deluge ended the probation of these incorrigible sinners.

Our own judgment of the character and actions of men may be erroneous. We cannot be assured, that in any instance, it *perfectly* coincides with *truth*. On any given occasion, persons may have *some* feelings, either better, or worse, than their actions express. But, in the case before us, we have the judgment of God himself. It was he, who pronounced the sentence; it was he, who inflicted the punishment.

When Noah and his family left the ark, there was a kind of new creation. The race had originated from one pair, and had become intolerably corrupt. They were now to commence another trial. In addition to the smallness of their numbers, the circumstances, under which their new probation commenced, were favorable to religion. They had witnessed the general destruction, which impiety and profligate manners had brought upon the world; and if God had sent the flood for the express purpose of punishing and destroying a rapacious, sensual, ungodly race; and saved Noah exclusively on this ground, that he had been righteous in his generation; if such discrimination were, in this world, made between the righteous and the wicked, it was easy to infer, that there would be a difference in the world to come.

The influence of this consideration, it appears, was not universal even in his own family.

After the lapse of a few ages, idolatry, and its usual attendant, profligate manners, became so general, that to secure even the existence of true religion among men, further extraordinary efforts on the part of Deity were indispensable. Accordingly, Abraham was selected to be the father of a distinct nation.

During his pilgrimage, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were so polluted with crimes, as to induce the Almighty to consume them with fire from heaven. *Ten* righteous persons would have saved the city; but even that small number could not be found. We might make the same reflection, as to the moral tendency and the effect of this event, as was made in relation to the more general destruction of mankind by the *deluge*. Unless the infernal prison were opened to human sight, it is not possible to imagine a more vivid display of the wrath of Heaven; nor an event more calculated to rouse a world, slumbering in vice. The catastrophe does not appear, however, to have been followed by any reformation, or even extensive alarm. The *inhabitants of Canaan* were, at that time, replenishing the measure of their guilt, and preparing for that general extermination, which was to be effected in a subsequent age, by God himself, through the instrumentality of his people Israel.

From the emigration of Israel from Egypt, a new era commences in religious history. The obvious design of Deity was, to procure an asylum for truth and virtue, expelled as they were, from the world in general. The unity of the Godhead, and the purity of the divine character, were accordingly inculcated with great frequency; and, in language, strong and perspicuous. The law was given under circumstances, extremely terrifying. *The Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount; and Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended, as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.*

The terror, occasioned by this scene, had scarcely subsided; and Moses had not yet descended from the mountain,

where he conversed with the Almighty, when this same people openly revolted from God, requesting Aaron to form an idol, under whose protection they might return to Egypt. During the forty years of their journeyings in the desert, their disobedience, murmurings, and impiety brought upon them numerous judgments.

Of that vast multitude, which were numbered on their leaving Egypt, but two persons were permitted to enter Canaan. The rest died in the wilderness, agreeably to a divine threatening, previously denounced. To a right estimate of their guilt, it is necessary to consider, that a series of miracles had been wrought for their emancipation; that their existence had depended on miraculous supplies; and that the symbol of Jehovah guided their marches.

Nor was their character materially altered, after their establishment in Canaan. Whether their government was administered by *Judges* or *Kings*, the same propensities might be discovered. They were immoral in their lives; impatient of those restraints, which Deity had imposed; and ready, on all occasions, to adopt the idolatrous worship of adjoining nations. It availed nothing, that prophets were commissioned to expostulate, and to denounce impending judgments. Israel would not return to their God. They were swept from the land of their fathers, and transferred to Assyria. The two remaining tribes, unreclaimed by this event, were reserved for similar punishment. Their *captivity* in *Babylon* destroyed, indeed, their attachment to *idolatry*; but the *national morals* were not improved. It is unnecessary to remind you particularly of the state of the Jews, when our Saviour appeared. He whose decisions are infallible, painted their vices in the darkest colours; and their existence, political and ecclesiastical, was soon after terminated by the Roman armies. No doubt, there had been upright and religious persons in every period of the Jewish economy, as there were in the patriarchal age, individuals of this character. But, if we judge of man, i. e. of the human species, by his appearance under both these dispensations, it is impossible to avoid a conclusion the most unfavorable.

But we have an opportunity of viewing man in the enjoyment of *higher* advantages, than those, either of *patriarchs* or *Jews*. When the latter dispensation gave place to christianity, *the light of the moon became as the light of the sun ; and the light of the sun sevenfold, as the light of seven days*. During the age of the apostles, and immediately after, the triumphs of christianity were rapid and extensive. The good effects, which this religion produced on the lives of those, who embraced it, were too obvious to be denied. Christians were distinguished from others by *meekness, benevolence, probity, and a spiritual life*. But this bright morning was succeeded by a day of clouds, darkness, and tempest. The christian church, so pure and patient, during the ages of persecution, degenerated in the season of its tranquillity. Ignorance, bigotry, intolerance, cruelty, avarice, ambition, and enormous profligacy, were openly exhibited among the professed followers of him, who was *meek and lowly in heart*, who declared, that *his kingdom was not of this world* ; and whose object was to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Not only were abandoned that converse with heaven, that contempt of the world, and that elevated morality, which had been so conspicuous in the lives of primitive saints ; but even all decency, all regard to appearances, were set at defiance : and that, not in *one country, and one* disastrous period only, but *generally*, and during *many* centuries. Since the reformation, there has doubtless been more piety in the church, than before that period. But, as some reflections have already been made on the present moral state of the christian world, it will be unnecessary to proceed further in this place. It has now been made evident, I conceive, that mankind, whether we view them in a civilized or barbarous state ; whether in the enjoyment of patriarchal, Jewish, or christian light, manifest great uniformity of moral character ;—a strong, inveterate attachment to vice.

III. As a distinct argument in proof of human depravity, I mention an acknowledged tendency to alter for the worse.

In addition to many proofs of such tendency, which might be obtained by a recurrence to the preceding remarks, I mention, that corruption, whether in political, literary, or religious institutions, is generally allowed to be proportionate to the age. *Old* and *corrupt*, in application to government, are terms almost synonymous. Of the religious orders, which have, in different periods, been instituted, many, it is well known, adopted the most austere manners. This austerity usually gave place, by degrees, to indolence, fraud, and dissipation. A person, forming strict laws for a new community, might, with good reason, hope to see them well observed, when first adopted; but he would have no doubt, that subsequent ages would be attended by relaxation. If little restraint were imposed by the laws; and considerable disorders were tolerated at the commencement, no rational person would expect the evil to correct itself. Such an issue would not be agreeable to the natural course of events. Whereas, the contrary, viz. a deterioration in the habits and morals of a community, at first well organized and governed, is a change, at which no one would be surprised.

IV. The moral feelings of mankind are indicated by the character, which pagan nations have attributed to their deities. This character is forcibly, and with great exactness exhibited in the subsequent lines,

"Gods, partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,  
Whose attributes were rage, revenge, and lust."

In what way can we account for the general prevalence of ideas, so unworthy of God, and so inconsistent with reason? when a right conclusion was much more obvious, than a wrong, why was the latter generally made, the former seldom, or never? There must have been a bias on the mind; —a fondness for profligate, rather than for pure deities. St. Paul evidently attributes pagan idolatry not to the difficulty of obtaining better opinions; but to an aversion in man from the character of Jehovah. *That, which may be known of God is manifest in them. The invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things*

*that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead : so that they are without excuse. When they knew God, they glorified him not, as God, neither were thankful. They did not like to retain God in their knowledge. Therefore they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image, made like to corruptible man.*

If the Gentiles did not like to retain God in their knowledge, neither did the Jews. They had, we have seen, witnessed and acknowledged many illustrious miracles, wrought by Jehovah, in favor of a religion, which declared, that the *gods of the heathen were vanity and a lie* : a religion, the immediate object of which, was to preserve the nation from idolatry. To avoid apostacy, there were many reasons of interest, as well as duty. Besides this there is generally prevalent a strong partiality in favor of the national religion. A change in this particular is, by the Deity himself, ranked among the most extraordinary events. *Pass over the isles of Chittim and see : and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see, if there be any such thing : Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods ?* It is immediately subjoined : *But my people have changed their glory for that which cannot profit.*

Now, if Jews and Gentiles have shown unequivocally a dislike to the moral purity of God, they have evinced beyond the possibility of doubt the immorality of their own character.

Were there not some moral taint, or wrong tendency common to the whole species, we might justly expect, to find some individuals, not guilty of having violated that law, which is holy, just, and good ; that law, every command of which has the sanction of reason. Of all the remote islands, which of later years, have been discovered, we might naturally hope, that there would be some, whose inhabitants, having learned the character of God, from his works, were habituated to worship the eternal spirit, in spirit and in truth. But the fact is, that these discoveries tend to establish the doctrine, we are considering. Wherever there are human beings, there is misery and vice. A community, whose lead-



ing object it is to obey reason, cultivate moral purity, and secure the favor of God, is not to be found on the earth.

Finally: Our opinion of mankind is generally, perhaps, universally less favorable, in proportion to our converse with the world.

If a man is credulous, and readily presumes on the correct views of men, it is commonly and justly remarked, that he is ignorant of mankind; and that further acquaintance will teach him better. This sentiment is usually expressed without the most distant apprehension of the inference, to which it leads.

From the preceding remarks, it appears, that whatever theory we adopt in accounting for the perverseness of man, the fact is undeniable: and further, whether there is in man by *nature*, a wrong tendency, a moral taint, or not, facts and appearances are, and always have been precisely as if the doctrine were true; and extremely different from what they *probably* would have been, had the doctrine been false. Greater disorder could not have been expected, had men been by nature inclined to evil: much less, would have been rationally expected, were they not thus inclined.

## LECTURE X.

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### *Human Depravity.*

THOUGH many facts have been mentioned in the preceding lectures, highly dishonorable to the moral character of man, there are others of a contrary aspect, which are supposed to invalidate the conclusion, to which the former would lead. If there is much *vice* among men, there is *likewise*, it may be thought, much *virtue*. If there is much *perjury, idleness, dissipation, and profanity*; there is undeniably much *truth, fidelity, diligence, and temperance*, and much decency of manner, in treating things sacred.

I answer, that advocates for the doctrine of human depravity, do not deny the existence of *real virtue or holiness among men*. They only deny, that this is the native production of the human heart, or ever exists there, without the particular agency of the Almighty. They further suppose, that the qualities, which have been mentioned, such as *veracity, temperance, industry, &c.* are by no means to be considered, as conclusive evidence of real virtue: i. e. of such a state of heart, as God and reason require; since these qualities are generally conducive to worldly advantage. Without *veracity* a man can neither enjoy reputation, nor conveniently transact business. Without *temperance* and *industry*, he will be subject to the like embarrassments. *Profane-ness of language, or levity* in regard to things sacred, exposes

a man to the displeasure of many, whom it is his interest not to offend. An atheist therefore, were he a man of prudence, would be guilty of none of these vices.

But there are many, you say, whose regularity of deportment evidently arises not from considerations of present convenience, but from their belief in a future retribution. The fact is not to be controverted. But, before we can use it in proof of moral goodness, it is necessary to ascertain, whether this abstinence from crimes, proceeds from a *love to moral rectitude*, as such, or from the *fear of future punishment*. For, whether human actions proceed from the fear of temporal, or eternal punishment, they are essentially the same. If the fear of being disgraced, or imprisoned tomorrow, be a motive, insufficient to constitute an action virtuous, it cannot be constituted such by the fear of being disgraced or punished beyond the grave. All, that can be proved in favor of a person, thus actuated, is, that a wrong disposition has not the same degree of ascendancy over *him*, which it might have over some *others*, in the like circumstances. It will hardly be asserted by any person, in the least habituated to contemplate moral subjects, that *fear of personal disadvantage* or suffering is *essentially virtuous*. Therefore, so far, as that regularity, observable among men, is the result of no higher principal, than fear, it affords no evidence of human virtue. It only proves, that vice or moral corruption, has not taken such entire possession of the mind, as to exclude from it all considerations of reason and personal interest.

A plausible objection to the doctrine, we are endeavoring to prove, may be supposed to arise from those social feelings, and those attachments of consanguinity, which are *extensively* if not *universally* discoverable among men.

I answer; if these social feelings are indeed virtuous, or morally good, the objection is much to the purpose; and although it would not invalidate the proofs, already adduced of *general* depravity, it *would* prove that there is, in the heart of man, by nature, real virtue, yet remaining.

Social feelings, parental affection, &c. are amiable qualities, essential to the existence of civil society, and extremely conducive to the happiness of man : but there is nothing in them, I apprehend, either *virtuous* or *vicious*. *One man* is naturally inclined to *cheerfulness* ; *another* to *gravity*. This *difference* probably arises from bodily organization.

But whether it does or does not, there is nothing of *morality* in it. To ascertain the moral character of a man, we do not inquire, whether he is naturally cheerful or gloomy.

The reasons for believing, that social feelings, parental affection, &c. though they *may* be under the influence of moral principles are not of themselves moral qualities, are the following :

I. They are by no means proportionate, to the good or bad characters of men. In some persons, whose lives are *dishonest*, *impure* and *profane*, you perceive parental affection, as strong as it is in the most virtuous. Crimes the most atrocious have been perpetrated under the influence of parental feelings. Nor does the strongest friendship for an individual necessarily prove any real love of virtue. It was the excessive fondness of Achilles for Patroclus, which induced him to sacrifice human victims, and to express the barbarous desire of feeding on the body of Hector. It was the friendship of Zophyrus for Darius, which induced him voluntarily to mangle and mutilate his own person : But these sufferings were, in regard to the Babylonians, the covering of deep dissimulation, and perfidy.

Virtue sometimes requires, not indeed to *eradicate* these feelings ; but to act in opposition to their *dictates*. Instance the elder Brutus, whom, as magistrate, duty required to punish his own sons for conspiring against the State. Now, if the social parental affections, were in *themselves* morally good, the stronger those affections were, the more, other things being equal, would there be of moral goodness : or, if these affections be the *result* of moral goodness, when *they* are strongest the heart must of necessity be the most virtuous.

It may be replied that in the cases, above mentioned, the

irregularity proceeds from the excess of a virtuous principle. By the term *virtuous principle*, must be meant either virtue itself, or something distinct from it. If the latter, i. e. if social affections be something distinct from virtue, it is precisely what I have endeavored to prove. But, if by *virtuous principle*, is meant virtue or moral goodness; the objection implies, that moral evil arises from an excess of moral goodness. Now moral goodness consists in conformity to the requirements of God. It is therefore just as absurd to speak of *excess* in virtue, as of excess in the straightness of a line. It is just as absurd, to say that criminal irregularity can arise from excess of virtue, as to say, that two lines may coincide so precisely, as not to coincide at all.

II. My other reason for believing, that the social feelings, and the attachments of consanguinity, are neither virtuous nor vicious, is, that they are not peculiar to moral agents. Many *irrational animals*, by associating together, contract a fondness for each other: and, as to the quality of attachment to their young, it is no less strong in the lion and tiger, than in the sheep and the dove. Now, if these qualities are common to all animals, whether they possess reason or not, and whether their natures be mild or ferocious, their existence in man proves nothing, as to his moral character.

You will reply, perhaps, that however plausible this conclusion appears, there must be some sophistry in the argument, as St. Paul, in his epistles to the Romans, and to Timothy, (Rom. i. 31. 2 Tim. iii. 3.) mentions the want of natural affection, as evincing extreme wickedness. If the quality itself were not morally good, its absence you imagine, could not be evil.

I answer, that this inference is not the legitimate offspring of the premises. It does not certainly follow, that a quality is morally good, because the want of it proves moral disorder. Were a judge on the bench, after examining the evidence on both sides, clearly to perceive where the truth lay, no person would, from this circumstance merely, form any conclusion, as to his moral character. His perception of the

*truth* might be no more virtuous, than his perception of the *witness*, who gave testimony. But *another* Judge, having the same cause under the same circumstances, might be so much governed by his passions or interest, as not to perceive the truth; in consequence of which he forms a wrong decision. In the latter case, the wrong decision proves the *vice* of the Judge; though a right decision would not have proved his *virtue*. Again: Voluntary *intemperance* always proves vice; but it is not true, that voluntary *temperance* always proves virtue. So, the telling of truth is, in itself, neither virtuous nor vicious; but the telling of that, which is not true, is good evidence of moral depravity. It may, in like manner, be true, that natural affection is not a moral quality; and yet, that it always exists in man, till smothered or extinguished by excessive crimes.

Let us next consider what evidence the *scriptures* give concerning the character of man.

As they were given by the inspiration of God, their testimony, if rightly understood, fully substantiates any doctrine. But, when facts are contrary to the seeming import of any passage, there is a strong presumption, that the seeming is not the real import. As to the moral condition of man, facts and the most obvious sense of scripture perfectly coincide.

I. The object of our Saviour's advent implies, that the character of man is vitiated: *The son of man came to see and to save that which was lost*: Again, *the son of man came into the world to save sinners*. It is likewise asserted, that *Christ tasted death for every man*; that *he gave his life for the world*. It appears then, that our Lord's coming had relation to the state of the whole human race. But if his coming had relation to the whole human race, and the object of it was to *save sinners*, it follows, that all men were of this character. And further, as the object of his coming is declared, in other words, to be the salvation of them that were lost, it follows, that this too, was universally the condition of man. The former, perhaps, would be more readily conceded, than the latter. If man is accountable; if there is in existence,

such a thing as moral obligation, the moral delinquency of man cannot be questioned. No one will assert, that man is entirely *innocent*: but, from these passages of scripture, it appears, that his departure from innocence is *such*, as to expose him to *perdition*.

II. Christ speaks of the world, as being hostile to his religion. (John vii. 7.) *The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth; because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil*. Here are two important assertions; 1. That the works of mankind are evil; 2. That they hated our Saviour for exhibiting this truth.

Those, who follow the example and doctrines of Christ, are said to be a community, acting on moral principles, differing from those, which influence the world in general. *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.* In connexion with this, Christ repeats the idea, which has been just noticed, viz. that there is hostility between his disciples and other men; *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them.* The same sentiment is often conveyed in the same words. The least, that can possibly be meant by such language, is, that the general current of human feelings is less favorable to christians on account of their religion. But, so far as christians obey their religion, they resemble their *master*, and him, by whom their *master* was sent. This is not merely an inference now made; it was expressly asserted by our Saviour, who said, *They have both seen and hated both me and my father.* There was then at least in all, to whom this language applied, a dislike of moral rectitude; a dislike of good men, of Christ and of the Father. Considering what was shown under the last particular, viz. that the gospel declares *all* men to be sinners, even in so high a degree, as to be exposed to perdition, it seems unreasonable to limit the term world, in the preceding passages, in which Christ speaks of the world's enmity to his religion: or to suppose, that none are comprehended in it, but certain individuals of uncommon depravity.

III. That infernal being, to whom the scriptures give the name of Satan, or the Devil, is denominated the god of

his world. His devotees are therefore, the *inhabitants* of this world. They are, therefore, obedient to his dominion. It would be easy to show, that not an *evil principle* merely, but an *intelligent agent* is here meant. But let it, if you please, be conceded for a moment, that by the term Satan is meant a principle of evil; the consequence is not less formidable; *viz.* that mankind are under the influence of an evil principle.

IV. In the eight chapter of Genesis, is a passage, strikingly to the present purpose. *The Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.* Of those stronger passages in the sixth chapter, asserting, that *every imagination of man's heart is only evil continually*, it may be plausibly said, that they describe not the character of mankind, but of that generation. But the sense of these words in the 8th chapter, cannot be thus limited. They relate not to any detachment of men; but to the whole mass. And, so far, as our subject is concerned, it is perfectly immaterial, whether the passage be read *for*, or *although* the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: as this particle has no effect on the proposition, but only on its connexion with what precedes. If the term *for* be exchanged for *although*, the sense will be, *I will not again curse the ground for man's sake*, although the imagination of his heart being evil from his youth, his wickedness may, on some future occasion, become as enormous, as was theirs, whom the flood destroyed. If the word *for* be retained, the meaning will be, but in a small degree, different. *I will not again curse the ground for man's sake, for the imagination of his heart is evil from his youth*; and therefore, his future crimes may call for continual repetitions of this exterminating judgment. The moral disorder of the human heart, is, on either supposition, asserted with equal clearness.

V. That mankind, in the gross, are sinners, and to such a degree, as to be exposed to divine wrath, is further proved by the apostle's declaration in the 2d chapter of his epistle to the Ephesians. *Among whom we all had our conversation*



*in the world, and were by nature children of wrath, even as others.*

The connexion of the passage is this. In the latter part of the preceding chapter, the apostle had mentioned the moral change, which had been produced in the character of the Ephesians, under the figure of a resurrection, or revival; comparing the power, by which it was effected to that, which the Father exerted in raising Christ from the dead. By the introduction of this comparison, he is, according to his manner, led off for a moment from his subject, and resumes it in the beginning of the 2d chapter, which begins thus, *and you hath he quickened, or brought to life, who were dead in trespasses and sins : wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit, that now worketh in the children of disobedience.* That, thus far, Gentiles are meant is conceded without controversy. It immediately follows, *Among whom we all had our conversation in time past, in the lusts of our flesh fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind ; and were by nature children of wrath, even as others.* It will be allowed, I think, that nothing can be more natural, than to understand the apostle, as speaking, in this latter quotation, of christians in general, comprehending both Jews and Gentiles. Had that been his design, he could not have used more appropriate language. He had charged the Gentile converts with having lived in great profligacy : and then subjoins, that this gloomy representation may be applied generally to the character of christians, previously to their embracing christianity ; for they all had the same origin, and were by nature inclined to sin, even as others.

There is, however, an explanation of the text, which, if true, destroys its pertinency, as it respects the purpose, for which it is now adduced. The two prominent points of this explanation are, 1. That the apostle does not here speak of christians in general, but of Gentiles. 2. That by nature is meant custom. As to the first, it is said, when the apostle had reminded those of the Ephesian church, who had been

Gentiles, what their character formerly was, he adds, such was the character of us all, who were Gentiles; and we were by nature, i. e. by custom, children of wrath, even as other Gentiles. It must be considered, as a great inconvenience, to say the least, attending this explanation, that St. Paul was not a Gentile; and, therefore, if he ranked himself among them, it was by mere courtesy. In this chapter, let it be noticed, he speaks distinctly of Jews and Gentiles; of the wall of partition, which had formerly kept them separate; which wall was then to be demolished. Now, it is highly unreasonable to suppose, that St. Paul, when distinguishing Jews from Gentiles, should take himself from the Jews, to whom he belonged, and rank himself among the Gentiles, to whom he did not belong. The fact seems to be this, that when the apostle uses the term, *ye*, throughout this whole chapter, he designates Gentiles particularly: where he uses the term, *we*, he speaks of Christians in general, whether of Jewish or Gentile origin; and when speaking of the Jews distinctly, he mentions them in the third person: e. g. in verse seventeen; *Christ came and preached peace to you*, that were afar off, i. e. to the *Gentiles*, and to them, that were nigh, i. e. the *Jews*. If he meant to rank himself with the Gentiles, why did he not say, *Christ came and preached peace to us*, that were afar off? We surely ought not without necessity to suppose, that the writer uses the terms *we* and *ye* indiscriminately; but necessity is so far from requiring this, that on such a supposition, the chapter is far less intelligible. Besides, that these terms are not thus indiscriminately used *throughout* the chapter, is conceded by the advocates of this explanation.

Hence it is reasonable to believe, that when the apostle said, *we all are, by nature, children of wrath, even as others*, he spoke in general terms, and had no distinct reference to Gentile converts.

The second important point in the explanation, which we are considering is, that the term *nature*, as used in this place, means nothing more than custom. Should this prove a just

refusing them; when we view all these considerations in their connexion, one with another, is it reasonable to deny the universal, and native depravity of man? Though it should be allowed, as doubtless it must, that there are considerable difficulties, attending the doctrine, the denial of it is accompanied by those, which are still greater. May God enable us to seek truth with impartiality, and in all cases to give that degree of assent, which is proportionate to the evidence exhibited.

## LECTURE XI.

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### *Human Depravity.*

My present object is,

I. Briefly to inquire as to the extent or degree of that corruption, the existence of which, I have before endeavoured to prove :

II. To notice some objections to the doctrine in question additional to those, which have been already mentioned :

III. Inquire, whether there is any connexion between the sin of our first parents, and the present moral character of their descendants.

I. As to the extent or degree of that corruption, the existence of which I have endeavoured to prove. It is not implied, in the remarks which have been made, that the disorders, common to the human heart, are the greatest conceivable. The scriptures, with great clearness and frequency, inform us, that there will be diversity, not only in the rewards, bestowed on the righteous, but in the sufferings, endured by the wicked. Though the wicked will find no period to their punishment, the degree awarded to some, will be less, than that inflicted on others. *He, who knows not his Lord's will; and does things worthy of stripes*, will be beaten with less severity, than he, who does the same things with more distinct knowledge of his duty. On the sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon, will doubtless be laid, in the day of judgment, no common burden of infamy and pain; which will, however, be exceeded by theirs, who contemned the personal ministry of Jesus Christ. Punishment will be proportionate to guilt. Therefore, all sinners are not, in the same degree, guilty. But in one particular, there is universal similarity. They are all destitute of that

holiness, or moral goodness, which is implied in love to the Supreme Being. If not, all the difference between those whom God will receive, and those whom he will reject, consists not in the nature of their characters, but in their degrees of goodness. Those, who have much of divine love, will be received, and made eternally glorious; those, who have little of this quality, are made the objects of their Maker's displeasure. Now, it would be quite inconsistent with the general import of scripture, to suppose, that any, who have any sincere affection for their Creator, on account of his moral rectitude, will be treated as incorrigible enemies. But if the moral character of God, is not the object of our love, such love can neither be the foundation of virtue, nor necessarily connected with it.

Further: It is asserted by St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, *that they who are in the flesh cannot please God.* (Romans, viii. 3.) What is meant by this term, appears by the connexion, in which it stands. Those to whom this term applies, and those who are led by the spirit, constitute the whole human family. Persons of the latter description, are called the sons of God; and it is said concerning them, *that they shall live*: Of the others, who live after the flesh, it is said, *they shall die*. But this assertion is true in relation to all, who are not led by the spirit. Of all such, then it is true, *that they cannot please God*. Of persons, who have love to the Supreme Being, on account of his holiness, or moral rectitude, this cannot be asserted. Therefore, all, who are not led by the spirit, are destitute of this quality; and consequently of all virtue, of which this quality is the foundation.

It is further said, *that the carnal mind is enmity against God: that it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be*. It cannot be questioned, that *the carnal mind* is the mind of those, who, agreeably to the apostle's language, *are in the flesh*. As the apostle must have had some meaning, when he asserted, concerning such persons, that their minds *are*

*enmity against God*, to ascertain his meaning, must be an object worth inquiry. That men have a dislike to all restraints, whether civil or divine, which they habitually disregard, will hardly be doubted. They, who habitually refuse compliance with the laws of God, must dislike those laws. Though their reason may, their hearts do not approve them. But these laws are an expression of the character of God. If, therefore, they dislike the one, it is impossible, that they should not dislike the other. It is certain then, that those who do not live after the *spirit*, dislike the livine moral character. That they are not *subject*, i. e. not *obedient* to the divine law, is beyond dispute.

Suppose further, that persons, thus disliking their Maker, as a moral being, should reflect that his law will be executed, and the punishment which it threatens, will be inflicted, would it not follow, as a natural consequence, that their feelings of dislike would be increased? Were they not restrained by fear, and had they nothing further to hope from the Almighty, would not their dislike thus increased to violent enmity, be expressed by words? A disloyal subject under an earthly monarchy, while persevering in sedition or disobedience, thereby exposing himself to punishment, would, as a matter of course, not only *dislike* the government, but *desire* a revolution; which revolution he would effect, were power sufficient lodged in his hands. While convinced of the impracticability of such an enterprise, he may never express such a wish, nor perceive it distinctly formed in his mind. Now, if disobedience has the same expression in regard to the divine government, which it doubtless has in relation to civil government, it follows, that the wicked man's dislike of the law, and consequently of the character of God, would, under certain circumstances, lead to measures, most strikingly impious.

That we may understand still more distinctly the apostle's assertion, that *the carnal mind is enmity against God*, let it be considered, under what circumstances, one man becomes the enemy of another. These are an opposition of charac-

ter and interest. If there is a man, whom I know to be of such a character, as to view mine with unvarying displeasure or abhorrence, and who is preparing to inflict heavy sufferings in proof of such displeasure, my feelings towards that person are not those of friendship, but hostility. Now the wicked, if they view the subject justly, know that Deity is of such character, as to contemplate theirs with displeasure; and that he is preparing to inflict heavy sufferings in proof of this displeasure. Must there not be the same inference in this case, as in the other?

It wicked men, you reply, are not *conscious* of possessing a mind, hostile to their Maker. The remark is true; but admission of its truth imposes no necessity of relinquishing the doctrine in question. Suppose the *best* created being in the Universe were in company with the *worst*: while each was ignorant of the other's character, there would be no actual hostility. Were two persons, between whom there had been a settled enmity, brought together, under circumstances, which prevented each from knowing the other, no unfriendly feelings would be excited. Yet they are in truth enemies. In like manner, if sinners mistake the attributes and requirements of God, fancying, that no great difference exists between his character and theirs, it is easy to perceive, why they are not conscious of any hostility. Although they should, in words, acknowledge the extent of his demands, yet if they never make these the subject of deliberate reflection, or if they suppose, that he, who makes these demands, will, in some way or other, dispense with them, feelings of enmity are not likely to be perceived.

In using the term *enmity against God*, in application to the human heart, we mean nothing more, than that state of feeling, which necessarily results to a corrupt being, from contemplating the divine rectitude, in connexion with a full persuasion of his own exposure to punishment, in consequence of his opposition to this rectitude. There can be no particular excellence in any sound, or combination of letters. Extreme attachment to this, or to any other term, is not to

justified. As the object of language is to convey ideas, whenever a term is found to be often misunderstood ; to convey more or less than the speaker designs, it ought to be fully explained, or disused. But no person, I am persuaded, who believes, that the hearts of wicked men are destitute of any affection to virtue or holiness, will condemn them to enmity, as in itself improper.

I shall now in the 2nd place notice some objections to the doctrine in general, additional to those, already mentioned. I. It is said, if sinning is natural, man cannot be blameworthy.

You will recollect what was said in the last lecture ; viz. "That may be considered, as natural to man, which, without any divine influence, he generally or universally pursues." The question then is, whether a man ceases to be blame worthy, because, without divine influence on the heart, he generally or universally pursues a course of disobedience. Let this question be considered, 1st, on the ground of necessity, 2nd, on the ground of freedom. They, who believe in the doctrine of necessity, whether on the principle of *Mr. Edwards* or *Dr. Priestly*, can with no consistency, urge this objection. They suppose, that all actions throughout the Universe, are necessary. Yet they believe, that there are such qualities, as virtue and vice. Now, if necessity does not exculpate him, who in a moral point of view proceeds obliquely part of the time, it will not exculpate those, who never proceed in a right direction. Once admit the doctrine of necessity, and so far as the present objection ; so far as human accountability is concerned, it matters not whether wrong conduct be occasional or perpetual.

Let us now contemplate the objection or supposition of man's liberty. It is evident, that men do sin part of the time. This, it is conceded, is not inconsistent with freedom ; and the transgressor is justly punished. That some individuals sin with great frequency, will not be denied. Do **y** for this reason, cease to be blame worthy ? Let us proceed a little further, and suppose, that a few abandoned



But, it is of still greater importance to observe, that the language, used by the apostle, is such, as cannot fairly be interpreted to mean any thing less. "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. For, as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

But how, you may ask, is it possible, that men should become sinners, through the offence of a distant progenitor? I answer; This is not possible, without their own consent. His sin is not theirs; nor can any constitution or appointment render it so. If a parent exhibits nothing but examples of profligacy before his children, his crimes are not chargeable to them. Yet, in consequence of his crimes, it is not only possible, but highly probable, that they will become as criminal, as himself. Further, if his animal system is so organized, as to excite him strongly to particular crimes, say, intemperance or revenge; his intemperance, his revenge is not theirs. Yet his animal system may be transmitted to them; through occasion of which, they may equal or exceed him in crimes.

It has been shown already, that as human creatures may choose sin part of the time, or be partially sinful, consistently with freedom; so it implies no absurdity to suppose, that, without any constraint destroying free agency, they may choose sin uniformly, or be entirely destitute of moral goodness. The fact, that they do thus choose, will be somewhat more easily conceivable, if the scriptures teach us to believe, that there is, consequent on the apostacy of Adam, a universal disorder, or deterioration in the animal economy.

Every person, who has attentively read the New Testament, but especially the writings of St. Paul, must have observed, that much is said of the body, the flesh and the spirit.

"If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if, through the spirit, ye do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." We read likewise, of the "law in the members," and the

"law of the mind." Obedience to the former, is the same thing, as to "live after the flesh:" obedience to the latter, the same, as habitually to "mortify the deeds of the body." The reason of man is always on the side of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit. It is the dictate of reason to obey God, and to counteract every inclination, that opposes his commands. It is the dictate of reason to walk by the spirit, i. e. to act conformably to divine precepts and divine suggestions. Those, on the contrary, who live under the influence of a sensual mind, oppose equally the reason of man and the empire of God. But all are said to be in the flesh, in whom a moral change has not been divinely produced: and those of the latter description only, are said to have the spirit of Christ dwelling in them. As the understanding is always coincident with the divine commands, and a sensual mind is in opposition to both, we see the ground of that conflict, which, in all ages, has been observed to exist in human beings: "I see the right and approve it; but pursue the wrong."

The passages quoted, together with numerous others of similar import, lead us to conclude, that the present moral degradation of man is derived through the medium of the flesh or bodily appetites. It was through these, that the first temptation was conveyed to Adam. His eye was delighted with the forbidden fruit; and his appetite urged him to partake of it. It is probable, that his bodily organization was from that moment altered in righteous judgment, that his passions became strong and imperious; the flesh began a violent warfare with the spirit: and those appetites, which led to his first sin, becoming from that moment more violent, were afterwards uniformly victorious: and this not merely through the increased impetuosity of the passions, but likewise, because the mind, by yielding, became contaminated, and ready to obey sensual impulse.

That same disordered constitution, which immediately resulted to our first parents from their sin, seems to have been transmitted to their descendants, administering temptations,

which they ought to resist, but, in fact, do not; in consequence of which their minds have become sensual and corrupt; indisposed to spiritual objects and pursuits, and disinclined to honor the Creator, who is over all, God blessed for ever more. Agreeably to this are the words of our Saviour, "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh: and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit."

It is remarkable, that St. Paul, when enumerating the works of the flesh, does not confine himself to those, which we should be likely to trace to such an origin; but comprehends in the number, "idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, seditions, heresies, and envyings;" hereby, plainly suggesting, that there is but one origin of all the moral disorders of man.

I will here make a few remarks, which might with more propriety have been made before, as to the effect, which human depravity has upon the understanding. Intellects, simply considered, are not the seat of moral disorder. The understanding, if we speak with precision, cannot be depraved. Yet the operations of the understanding are doubtless liable to be influenced by the heart, or will. The good man, therefore, other things being equal, is more likely, than another to obtain correct views of religious truth: 1. Because he has fewer prejudices: 2. Because, having a fondness for subjects of a moral nature, he acquires a facility of comprehending them. This happens agreeably to a general law of our natures. That, which is interesting to the mind, often occurs. Persons acquire a readiness and dexterity in viewing and comparing objects, to which they are accustomed. On this principle, the artificer immediately forms a judgment of any materials, used in his art. On this principle, the military man sees, at once, all the advantages and disadvantages of a particular station. On the same principle, the well informed merchant sees all the bearings of a question in commerce, though an easier one in law or morals might be wholly unintelligible. The best man in the world, perhaps, has no more intellects, than the worst; but if, in this partic-

ular, they were originally equal, the decisions of the former, in general; especially those concerning the relation between man and his Creator, are more to be relied on, than those of the latter.

I have now finished what I designed to say to you on the subject of human depravity.

Instead of recipulating the arguments, which have been used, I would close with an appeal to your feelings. I take it for granted, that no person will deny the correctness of, at least, one assertion, which has been made, viz. that Deity requires, and has a right to require universal rectitude, i. e. unremitting conformity to reason and his own law. On this ground, I request you to make a decision, not concerning the character of our species in general; but concerning your own. And, lest there should be an indistinctness, from taking into view too great a portion of your existence, let your attention be confined to a single day. "Whether you eat, drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." You rise in the morning: is it with a pious determination to devote the day to your Maker? You attend devotional exercises in this place. Is it with a spirit of faith, love and submission? You pursue the lessons of the day with commendable assiduity. But does God; does the Redeemer; does a heart, impressed with duty, excite this diligence? The day passes; and the shades of evening cover you. Are these hours accompanied with a sensible conviction, that "you are not your own but bought with a price?" On reviewing the transactions of the day, concerning what portion of the whole would you say, It was an act of cordial submission to God? But, if one day afford no such instance, do all the days of which life is composed? If not, the apostle's language is perfectly intelligible. "Having no hope, and without God in the world."

## LECTURE XII.

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### *Atonement.*

IN preceding lectures, we have endeavored to show the general and deep apostacy of the human race.—That we possess a readiness to sin, an indisposition to duty; and, unless excited by divine influence, do never perform actions, which are holy, or strictly speaking, virtuous. If this doctrine has been proved, or is susceptible of proof, you cannot doubt for a moment, that it is at once melancholy and interesting. That inattention and levity, with which this subject is often treated, is wholly without excuse. Even if the doctrine were not capable of being fully proved; even if the objections against it appeared somewhat stronger, than the evidence, on which it rests, so important are its connexions, if true, that no sober man would mention it with ridicule, or indifference. We pay attention, with good reason, even to possibilities, when the event, considered possible, is acknowledged to be of high moment. But the doctrine of human depravity cannot be known not to rest on plenary evidence, without more attention, than many, who reject it, are pleased to bestow on the subject.

Though I have endeavored to show, that in the character of man previously to regeneration, there is an entire absence of holiness, or moral rectitude, the importance of the doctrine, now to be investigated, viz. that of atonement does by

no means depend on the success of this attempt. Whether men are entirely depraved, or not, that they are depraved in a greater or less degree, is far from admitting dispute. If there is in the universe a rule of moral rectitude, to which intelligent beings are bound to conform, it is undeniable, that mankind are sinners. If so, they are in need of pardon. In the christian religion, pardon is offered. Our present object is to ascertain, on what ground this offer is made; in other words, whether atonement has been made for sin.

In relation to this subject, it may be said, in the first place, that nothing is more common under the divine government, than for one person to be the medium of communicating benefits to another. So far as we know, there is not an insulated object in the universe; nothing which is not dependent on other things, and which does not influence them in its turn. Most of the enjoyments, which we receive, are conveyed through the channel, either of friends, or of those, whose own interest is promoted by advancing ours. And as it is so common, for Deity to bestow favors on us through the instrumentality of men, his doing it by the intervention of angels, or of his own Son, would be evidently analogous to the general methods of his providence.

Through the instrumentality of good men, the sovereign of the universe bestows on the wicked two kinds of benefits; viz. such as are calculated to bring them to a better mind; and others, which relate to present enjoyments.

Prophets, apostles, and all good men, who have zealously and faithfully exhibited moral truth, or those excellent effects on the life, which it is calculated to produce, have been the channels, through which divine mercy has been conveyed to the world. In this way, the profligate have been restrained, the thoughtless have been led to reflection, and, in thousands, permanent change of character has been the result.

But men often find themselves, by their indiscretions or vices, reduced to a state, from which repentance and reformation will not recover them. They are then in need of other

assistance, than that of instruction or moral suasion. If a man should dissipate his substance by prodigality, you might indeed do him a great kindness by moral discourse on the unreasonableness and criminality of his past life. But however successful these laudable endeavors may be, in producing conviction, and even a change of character, he is not thereby restored to his former condition. His means of subsistence have vanished; and without gratuitous supplies, he must perish. Repentance, however sincere, does not effect his restoration. If a person, by a course of intemperance and debauchery, destroy his health, the most profound penitence will not restore it. A speedy, and perhaps an entire recovery is impossible. But if not, it cannot be effected without medical application, and the assistance of others. If a man, whether through inattention or design, throw himself into the ocean, it is not repentance, but the efforts of his friends, which must save him from drowning. Men are indeed continually bringing difficulties on themselves, from which no efforts of their own will give relief. Nor is it at all uncommon for them to involve themselves in evils, from which they cannot be extricated, even by the greatest exertions of others. If a man is proved to have committed murder, his own repentance and intercession of his friends, are equally unavailing to save him from punishment.

It hence follows, that if, by their apostacy from God, men are placed in a condition, from which even repentance and reformation alone, cannot afford them relief, it is perfectly analogous to events, which we constantly witness under the divine government. And should it be found, that either in this life or another, the consequences of sin, i. e. punishment, are absolutely unavoidable, it would be perfectly similar to numerous and well known facts.

Among all, who believe christianity to be a divine religion, it is agreed, that benefits are bestowed on mankind, through the intervention of Jesus Christ. Those, who deny, that atonement has been made, for the sins of the world, cannot however, hesitate to acknowledge, that the human race in

general, having broken the law of God, are sinners, and that Christ came to save them. Human salvation is, therefore, procured through intervention of Christ. There is indeed diversity of opinion as to the kind of assistance, which the condition of men required. All are agreed, that they needed instruction and moral suasion; and all are agreed, that this want has been supplied by the Redeemer. Ignorance and vice, it will not be denied, were obstacles to the salvation of men: these obstacles, Christ came to remove. Now if there were, in addition to these, other impediments, it will hardly be denied, that their removal was likewise the object of his coming. Those, therefore, who oppose the doctrine of atonement, must do it chiefly on this ground, that nothing of the kind, was necessary: and this is in fact the ground, on which the doctrine is opposed. By this consideration, its opponents are led to put a construction on many passages of scripture, which their first appearance, to say the least, would not suggest. If, therefore, it should be found, not only that the impenitence of sinners is an obstacle to their salvation; but even that the pardoning of them, when penitent, is a matter of real difficulty, the principal argument against the doctrine of atonement will be destroyed; and no reason will exist for seeking a figurative or farfetched meaning to those passages, which seem to support it.

But though I shall endeavor to show, that there were important obstacles to the pardoning of sin merely on repentance, it is to be considered, that the nonexistence of such obstacles could by no means be inferred from our inability to perceive them. Were it true, that no necessity for the atonement of Christ could be discerned by us, it would still be rashness to conclude against the doctrine, so long, as the language of scripture is strongly in its favor. For, as there is relation and dependence among all parts of the divine government, any particular measure may have innumerable unknown bearings and consequences. If we could see no reason, why pardon should not be extended to the penitent, solely on the ground of his penitence, the infinitely wise



Governor of the universe, whose attention is not confined to any one object, nor to any part of his vast empire, who intuitively and constantly beholds all parts, and their relation to the whole, might discern, that great disorders, vice, and misery, would result from such a measure. Therefore, should it be found, that the language of scripture is much in favor of the doctrine of atonement, they, who would destroy the argument, hence arising, must show, not only that we can discern no necessity for an atonement, but that such necessity cannot be discerned by the Almighty.

The books of nature and revelation conspire in teaching us, that God maintains a government over the universe, and that this government, like those among men, is maintained by rewards and punishments. Nor indeed is it possible for us to conceive, that government should be supported in a different manner. Let it be supposed, that a wise code of laws are adopted by a particular community. In this code, punishment will of course be denounced against certain crimes. If these laws are never executed, they will be nearly or entirely useless. The utility of laws consists in their influence in deterring from crimes; and they effect this, by exciting fears of punishment; but if punishments are observed never to follow crimes, all fears of them vanish; the good have as little to hope, and the bad as little to fear, as if no laws had ever been enacted. Nor did any wise government ever consider, that penitence in the criminal sufficiently atones for violations of law.

Let us inquire for a moment, what would be the result of a government, instituted on such a plan. Laws are enacted, let it be supposed, against dishonesty, arson, and murder, threatening death to all, who are guilty of these offences. Some individual, impelled by revenge or malice, enters his neighbor's house, burns his property, and murders his children. The culprit is apprehended and repents of the outrage. On the manifestation of which repentance, he is immediately set at liberty. Similar crimes, whenever committed in the same manner, escape punishment. Under such

an administration, would the community be in a good state ; or could peaceable citizens enjoy safety ? What terror, would the law excite in him, who was meditating mischief ? Should he be apprehended, he well knows, that repentance brings impunity. Two persons, let it be imagined, are guilty of the same crime. One repents, and receives no punishment. The other does not repent, and suffers the penalty of the law. The latter, before execution, complains of the partiality of the court, and supports his complaint by saying, that whereas he, and the other person have equally broken the law, the other person is acquitted, and he condemned. He is told, in reply, that the other person has repented. He rejoins, that the law did not threaten punishment to the not repenting of a crime ; but to the commission of it : that the law speaks of that particular act, and not of any subsequent temper. Besides, if the execution of a law, were to depend on the subsequent temper of him, who had broken it, how long a time must be assigned to the culprit, to ascertain whether he will repent or not ?

Perhaps it will be said, that though both were equally guilty in breaking the law, and were consequently then equally deserving of punishment, the one, by penitence, has made atonement ; and the other has not. The assertion is not true. Penitence has made no atonement. Those, who were sufferers by the crime are not redressed, government is not supported, nothing is done to prevent future crimes, or to ensure safety to the well disposed. It is true indeed, that if any thing could take place, answering these purposes ; any thing, by which the honor of the law would be secured, and crimes prevented, a merciful, and even a wise magistrate might be disposed to show favor to the penitent. But a government that should always forgive, and that too, without any security, to its own reputation, it is evident, on a moments reflection, could not be maintained.

I know, that "God's ways are not our ways, nor are his thoughts our thoughts." Neither can we tell, how far there is analogy between divine and human governments. But

what has been observed may show, at least, how little we are to regard the observation of those, who tell us, that the culprit's penitence is the whole object of civil punishment; or, at least, that if this object were obtained, all necessity for punishment would cease.

As we know not, how far into the universe, the effects of human apostacy may extend, nor how weighty may be its influence, where it is felt, our reason is by no means sufficient to determine, what measures were necessary on the part of God, to counteract this influence, and to render it consistent with wisdom and goodness to forgive the offender. Yet some reasons, why atonement was necessary, may be easily discerned.

It must be an object of real importance to the universe, that the character of God should be made known. That this has a near connexion with the virtue and happiness of his intelligent offspring, cannot be doubted. The character of a parent, Governor or King, is known to have great effect on the morals and happiness of those, whom they respectively govern. As the moral character of the Supreme Being is perfect, he must contemplate virtue with approbation, and vice with displeasure. It is just as impossible, that he should not hate the latter, as that he should not love the former. He, who is indifferent to vice, is as certainly indifferent to virtue. For Deity not to make known, in some way, his displeasure at vice, would leave his creatures in as much suspense, as to his character, as his forbearance to exhibit his complacency in virtue. If Deity, as a perfect Being, necessarily contemplates sin with aversion and abhorrence, it is both fit in itself, and necessary to the good of his empire, that this aversion should be made known. It is fit, because those feelings, which are suitable to be entertained, are suitable to be made known. It is incongruous, that external deportment should not correspond with the judgment of the mind, and the emotions of the heart. It is dishonorable to God, to doubt, that his administration, viewed extensively, is an expression of his character. It is neces-

sary to the good of Gods' universal empire, that his displeasure at sin should be made known, because happiness cannot prevail in the universe, without regularity and virtue; but in order to this, it must be seen, that the virtuous and vicious are not equally esteemed. It must be seen, which of the contending interests is patronized by the Deity. The law indeed speaks terror to the guilty; its language, therefore, perfectly corresponds with the divine purity: but if it be seen by all beings in the universe, many of whom perhaps are now in a state of trial, and many of whom will, at every given period, be in a state of trial, that sin is not punished; but that while the law of God expresses one thing, or speaks in a particular language, his proceedings speak a language either the reverse of this, or else materially different from it, there must, so far, as we can see, be the appearance of inconsistency in him, who rules the universe. That expression, with regard to good and evil, which was made by the law, is no longer apparent. "Though words are insignificant," says a respectable writer of our own, "actions are more so. It is a common and just observation, that actions speak louder than words: yea, a maxim, on which, we so firmly rely, that we give the whole weight to the former, when they contradict the latter. All are agreed, that the mind and will of God, may be intelligibly expressed in words. Yet no one will deny, that they may be written in much deeper and more legible characters, in the sensible pleasures and pains, which he may bestow, or inflict on us. Therefore, the evidence of God's love of virtue, and hatred of vice, must ultimately be derived from the treatment which he gives his creatures. In this, we ultimately, and most sensibly, discover his views of the characters of his creatures, and the estimation, in which he holds them: and in this, we most clearly discover the feelings of the divine mind toward virtue and vice." West. p. 19.

That the divine displeasure against sin, should be rendered manifest, is necessary, not only as purity of character in a magistrate, tends to promote the virtue and happiness of those,

over whom he presides; but likewise, because motives to obedience will, in that case, be much more distinct and powerful. While this displeasure is not shown, either by sufferings, inflicted on the offender, or by some other method, it is scarcely to be conceived, that the creatures of God, should not cease to view sin in its true light; and that they should not expect impunity, in case of apostacy. When it is once understood, under an earthly government, that repentance universally supersedes the execution of laws, the motives to obedience being enfeebled, crimes will be multiplied. But motives are as certainly employed in the divine government, as in those maintained among men. It seems, therefore, that the pardoning of sin, without some attendant act or event expressing the same thing, which is expressed in the divine law, would encourage disorder and vice through the empire of God. The subjects of his government would naturally, I should think necessarily, conclude, that his abhorrence of sin was less, than his threatenings had led them to imagine.

"Whatever may be the rules of pardoning mercy," says Mr. Hampton, "it can hardly be supposed, that a wise and good lawgiver will exercise it, or mitigate the rigour of the law, especially in many instances, without showing at the same time, his regard to the reasonableness of the law and the equity of its sanctions; or, which is the same, to the demands of his law and justice: because otherwise his conduct would be an encouragement to disobedience, and of consequence, his mercy, though a favor to a few, would be injustice to the whole."

If God see fit to pardon sin on any conditions, we cannot reasonably suppose, that they will be such, as either to give a wrong impression concerning himself, or to propagate a spirit of disorder and rebellion. It is highly important, that God should be known through the universe, as a God hating sin, and that every apprehension of a different nature should be removed. God cannot deny himself, nor will he ever cease to exhibit, in his providence, that proportion, harmony, and divine beauty, which adorn his character.

## LECTURE XIII.

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### *Atonement.*

It was said, in the last lecture, that those, who oppose the doctrine of our Saviour's atonement, must do it on this ground, that nothing of the kind was necessary.

It was remarked, in reply, that even if we were unable to discern any need of atonement, i. e. any obstacles to the exercise of mercy on terms of repentance merely, it would, by no means, follow, that such reasons did not exist in the view of that Being, who beholds the whole universe, with all its relations and connexions. But far from conceding the truth of what is here supposed, I proceeded to suggest a number of considerations, which, according to the best ideas, which we can form on the subject, present obstacles to the pardoning of sin, merely on condition of repentance.

I shall now apply more directly, to the government of God, some observations then made concerning civil governments, with a view further to show, that the propriety of pardoning sin on the sole condition of repentance, is far from being obvious.

Were offenders made happy on so easy terms, the obedient and disobedient would be treated alike. Whereas, the divine law declares, it shall go well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked; the event, as here supposed, is, that it will go well with both. For if the wicked, i. e. those, who have

sinned while in a state of probation, are made happy, they receive precisely what was promised to the righteous; nothing more than happiness, being promised to the latter. Now, if the matter were left here, would not an observing spectator of God's proceedings, on being told, that virtue is an object of divine approbation, and vice of the divine displeasure, immediately reply, "How does this appear? Two beings, we see, are put on their trial for happiness, on condition of obedience: but he, who disobeys, receives the same treatment, as the other."

Or, suppose two beings in a state of trial disobey their Creator. The one repents, and is rewarded; the other does not repent, and is punished. In the latter case, i.e. when the impenitent is punished, the divine law and the divine proceedings express precisely the same thing, viz. hatred of sin. In the former case, the expressions of the two are completely opposite.

That the consideration of repentance does not legally justify this difference, will be evident, when we consider the necessary extent of divine requirements. These are nothing less, than unfailing moral rectitude. If it be suitable, that Deity should demand of his creatures conformity, in any instance, to that, which is morally right; such conformity, may, with propriety, be demanded in all instances. Indeed, there would be undeniable inconsistency, were not the demand universal. You cannot easily suppose any thing, more dishonorable to the supreme law giver, than that he should tolerate particular violations of law, on condition the remainder should be kept. If intelligent creatures conform to the law, it is no more than their duty: it cannot, of course, have the slightest influence, strictly speaking, in making amends for crimes. It is not the less true, that I violated the law yesterday, because I have kept it to day; nor is there, on that account, less demerit and turpitude in yesterday's offence. Penitence is only the feelings of an obedient heart, in view of its past delinquency. The only difference, therefore, between the repenting and unrepenting

transgressor, is, that the disobedience in one case, is continued longer, than in the other. But the law, with equal clearness, denounces punishment against both.

By what has been said, thus much at least, I conceive, has been made to appear, that there is not an obvious propriety in forgiving sin without atonement; and that, according to the best views, which we can entertain on the subject, it was necessary, if grace were exercised towards sinners, that such exercise of grace should be accompanied with some expression of the divine will and character, comporting with that expression, which is made in the divine law: something, which might prevent the subjects of God's moral government from imagining, that his hatred of sin is less, than his law represents.

A sentiment, similar to this, was found in the first edition of Dr Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, clothed in that powerful language, which he had so much at his command. "If we consult," said he, "our natural sentiments, we are apt to fear, lest before the holiness of God, vice should appear more worthy of punishment, than the weakness and imperfection of human nature can ever seem to be of reward. Man, when about to appear before a Being of infinite perfection, can feel but little confidence in his own merit, or in the imperfect propriety of his own conduct. In the presence of his fellow creatures, he may often justly elevate himself, and may often have reason to think highly of his own character and conduct, compared to the still greater imperfection of theirs. But the case is quite different, when about to appear before his infinite Creator. To such a being, he can scarcely imagine, that his littleness and weakness should ever seem to be the proper object, either of esteem or reward. But he can easily conceive, how the numberless violations of duty, of which he has been guilty, should render him the object of aversion and punishment. Neither can he see any reason, why the divine indignation should not be let loose, without any restraint, upon so vile an insect, as he is sensible that he himself must appear to be. If he



would still hope for happiness, he is conscious that he cannot demand it from the justice, but that he must entreat it from the mercy of God. Repentance, sorrow, humiliation, contrition, at the thought of his past conduct, are, upon this account, the sentiments which become him, and seem to be the only means, which he has left for appeasing that wrath, which he knows, he has justly provoked. He even distrusts the efficacy of all these, and naturally fears, lest the wisdom of God, should not, like the weakness of man, be prevailed upon to spare the crime, by the most importunate lamentations of the criminal. Some other intercession, some other sacrifice, some other atonement, he imagines must be made for him, beyond what he himself is capable of making, before the purity of the divine justice can be reconciled to his manifest offences."

In view of these considerations, and of the acknowledged fact that God does, in some way or other, pardon offenders, there is, to say the least, a degree of probability, that measures have been taken of the nature described.

I now ask your attention to an undeniable fact, viz. the death of Jesus Christ, by whom the worlds were made, and in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Judging from the language, both of the prophets and evangelists, it would seem, that his sufferings on this occasion were unusual in their severity. The prophet Isaiah uses the following language, "He was oppressed and afflicted: It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief."

In the twenty second Psalm, are many passages, which are by no means applicable to David. To Christ, they apply with exactness; and this application is made by himself, and by the evangelists, who record his sufferings. "They pierced my hands and my feet: they parted my garments and cast lots upon my vesture. I am poured out like water; and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far

from helping me, and from the words of my roaring." From the history, which we have of our Saviour, it appears, that he was emphatically a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Immediately before his death, he is represented, as passing through a scene of suffering, of which, on ordinary principles, no satisfactory account can be given. On the night of his crucifixion, when he had supped with his disciples, he withdrew from them, "and kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. And there appeared unto him an angel, strengthening him. And, being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground." On this occasion, he said to his disciples, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.

Such extreme agitation of mind appears surprising, whether we consider, that Christ had from the beginning clearly foreseen his own death; or that many persons, both with the aids of religion and without them, have met death with less apparent depression.

Our Lord had, on many occasions, spoken of his own death, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem; he had even mentioned the manner, in which it should be effected. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so also shall the son of man be lifted up."

Many persons, we know, among pagans, Jews and christians, have, with great fortitude, encountered severe sufferings. Not a few have manifested constancy in the midst of tortures. A Jewish mother, and her seven sons, suffered death, for their religion, in the time of Antiochus. To them was applied every species of torture, which could be invented by human malice and ingenuity. All these were insufficient to extort any expressions of perturbation, or even timidity. Stephen, in view of his execution, betrayed no symptoms of distress. Many of the early christians rather courted, than avoided martyrdom. Many protestants, in later ages, have anticipated the flames, and endured them, without the appearance of terror.

But, when our Saviour was in the garden of Gethsemane, he was at once depressed and agitated. No language can evince greater agitation, than the words, already quoted from the evangelist. "Being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground." What account is to be given of this extraordinary fact? Even those, who deny the atonement of the Savior, believe him to have been, at least, a great and good man, whom the Father honored with a high commission. Even if nothing more than this were true, it would be extremely difficult to give any rational account of the scene, which the evangelist describes. If there were nothing of an extraordinary nature then in the view of Christ; if his death were connected with nothing of more moment, than the death of other prophets; especially if his sufferings were designed to afford a noble specimen of fortitude; it is strange, even to astonishment, that he should have manifested such unspeakable consternation. How came it to pass, that the greatest of all the prophets, who was emphatically styled the son of God, should have suffered with less apparent magnanimity, than many of his predecessors? How came it, that He, who is head of the christian church, and who, in all things, hath the pre-eminence, did not manifest as little emotion, in view of the cross, as many of his disciples in subsequent ages? No person, I think, will consider this inquiry, as unnatural or impertinent. Let us now suppose, that Christ suffered for human offences; and that the pains, which he endured, were to express the divine displeasure against sin; let us suppose, to use the prophet's language, that "he made his soul an offering for sin," and that therefore, it "pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief." On this ground, it will not appear incredible, that his sufferings, should be incomparably greater, than any, which had been previously endured. Nor is it strange, that such sufferings should have produced uncommon effects on our Savior's animal system, and should have extorted from him corresponding expressions.

Let us now consider, whether the death and sufferings of Christ, are not mentioned in scripture, as answering most important purposes in the economy of redemption; and whether these are not represented as the ground, on which the sinner receives forgiveness.

The prophet Isaiah uses the following language, "He was wounded for our transgressions: he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes, we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray: the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." Unless the pains and death of our Lord were the ground, on which, or the medium, through which, the sinner's pardon is obtained, what meaning had the prophet in saying, "he was wounded for our transgressions? Christ is said to have suffered, "the just for the unjust; and to have given his life a ransom for many." Christians are said, to be "redeemed by the blood of Christ. St. Paul says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." In these words, let it be remarked, two things are specified; 1. An effect; 2. The manner, in which this effect was produced. The effect is our "redemption from the curse of the law: the manner is Christ's "being made a curse for us." By the curse of the law is evidently meant, the penalty, or punishment, which the law denounceth. It is so explained by the apostle himself, when he says from the Pentateuch, "Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things, written in the law, to do them." From this curse, this penalty, this punishment, Christ has redeemed all who believe. In what way? By his efforts to reclaim their wanderings,—to bring them back to a virtuous life? This is, indeed, necessary to their salvation: but does this of itself redeem them from the curse of the law? By no means. The penalty, once incurred, eternally remains due: and the penalty becomes due, whenever all things, written in the law, are not performed. It is perfectly absurd, and will appear so, on a little reflection, to speak of future obedience, as procuring redemption from the curse of the law. But the

apostle has, with perfect clearness, shown how this redemption is obtained ; viz. by our Savior's being made a curse for us : i. e. by his having endured that penalty of the law, in consequence of which, we are set at liberty. The penalty of the law is an expression of God's displeasure at sin : this expression has been made by the sufferings of Christ.

The apostle John speaks of Christ, as "the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only ; but for the sins of the whole world." In the preceding verse, he appears in a different character ; namely, that of an advocate. "If any man sin," saith the sacred writer, "we have an advocate with the Father ; it is then subjoined, "And he is the propitiation for our sins." In discharging the office of advocate, he proceeds on the ground of that propitiatory sacrifice, which he offered upon earth. The Father is besought to confer favors on men, in virtue of those sufferings, which the Son endured at his crucifixion. "As the sacrifices of the Old Testament," says Dr. Whitby, "were slain, and the blood shed, before it was brought to the mercy seat, and yet the high priest made atonement with it, when, at his entrance into the holy place, he offered up that blood to God, in his peculiar presence ; so, though our Lord was slain and shed, his blood on earth, yet may he make atonement in the presence of God with it, by virtue of the sufferings, which he endured, when this blood was shed."

We ought, by no means, to pass unnoticed the words, used by our Saviour, when he instituted the sacrament. "This," saith he, speaking of the wine, "is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

It would be easy to multiply passages of a similar nature. They are scattered in great profusion through the scriptures, especially the New Testament. That the apparent meaning of these passages is such, as to countenance and support the doctrine of atonement, will hardly be denied. It would be criminal and absurd, therefore to seek a different interpretation, unless there is something in the doctrine itself, abhor-

om reason, or from other parts of inspired scripture. I have endeavored to show, that reason is so far from being obstacles to our belief in the doctrine, that the basis of God's pardoning sins without any atonement, is to such objections, as reason is wholly unable to re-

It is, by consequence, so far from being true, that its improbability renders it necessary to seek some refutation of these similar texts, different from that which is obvious, that there is a strong presumption in its favor. Were these passages equally susceptible of two interpretations, one in favor of atonement the other having none to it; it is questionable whether any person, who had habituated impartially and sedulously to contemplate the principles of natural religion, would hesitate to adopt the former interpretation. How much less, when this interpretation is undeniably far more literal and obvious, than the other. It must, I think, be conceded by those, who deny the doctrine of atonement, that had it been the intention of the apostles to have taught it, they could not easily have found language, more to their purpose.

I will now briefly notice the remarks, which are made to weaken or destroy the evidence hence arising.

That the death of Christ is called a sacrifice for sin, because it really was such; but merely in accommodation to the prejudices of mankind, who, from the beginning of the world, expected pardon through the efficacy of sac-

By this it appears, that the general sentiment of mankind has been such, as we have conveyed; viz. that repentance and amendment of life are not of themselves sufficient to procure forgiveness.

I will now attend to the objection; that the death of Christ is called a sacrifice for sin in accommodation to the prejudices which prevailed. This objection you will observe, concedes to us, that the language of scripture is such, as to convey the ideas, for which we contend; viz. that Christ died, as a sacrifice for sin.

That he did die for this purpose, is either true, or it is not. The latter is what the objector designs to prove : but he allows, at the same time, that the writers of scripture designed no such thing. They, to be sure, disbelieved the doctrine : but since mankind in general had a false belief concerning the efficacy of sacrifice, they not only forbore to oppose the error ; but used such language, as was calculated to confirm it. The objection does not require nor deserve more particular examination.

II. Our Saviour is said to have been made a sacrifice for sin, it may be urged, not indeed, with design to deceive, but in allusion to Jewish sacrifices. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, however, it has long since been observed, gives a very different account of the matter. He assures us that the Mosaic phraseology was founded on the Levitical sacrifices being types, or prefigurations of the sacrifice of Christ. "The law was a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things. The priests, that offer gifts according to the law, serve under the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle." The Levitical priesthood was a shadow of the priesthood of Christ, in like manner, as the tabernacle, made by Moses, was according to that showed him in the mount.

The doctrine of this epistle, saith Butler, and after him, M'Knight, plainly is, that the legal sacrifices were allusions to the great and final atonement, to be made by the blood of Christ : and not that this was in allusion to those. To support which, the following passages are pertinently cited. "It is not possible, that the blood of bulls and of goats, should take away sin. Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering ; i. e. such as were made under the law, thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. Lo I come, I delight to do thy will, O God. By which will, we are sanctified, by the offering of the blood of Jesus once for all."

III. Though the death of Christ is called a sacrifice, other things, which are not literally so, it may be observed, are mentioned under that name. Good works are called sacrifices; and christians are required to "present themselves, as living sacrifices to God." But these are never represented, as sacrifices for sin: nor are they ever mentioned in a manner, which has the least tendency to lead men to regard them in this manner.

We are sometimes reminded of this passage, found in Colossians 1. 24. "I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church." By the afflictions of Christ, here mentioned, what must we understand? Surely, not the sufferings, which Christ endured: that were impossible. Evidently then, those sufferings in the cause of Christ, are meant, which were reserved for the apostle. These he was ready, cheerfully, and bravely to encounter, for the sake of the church. It is, by no means, denied, that a man may die for the religion, or for the church of Christ. This was actually done by St. Stephen. But it is not said of Stephen, or of any other merely human being, that "he died for the sins of the world;" that he was "made a sin offering:" that he "appeared to take away sin, by the sacrifice of himself:" that he "bore our sins in his own body." It is not said, that on Stephen, "the Lord has laid the iniquities of us all;" nor has any apostle thus judged; If St. Stephen "died for all, then were all dead."

Though Christ is represented in a great number of places, as a sacrifice for sin, the whole scripture evidence of his atonement is far from depending on such representation. In many of the passages quoted, no allusion to the sacrifices of the Mosaic law is recognized. They would have an important meaning, and afford strong proof of the doctrine in question, even if the Mosaic ritual had never existed. The expressions are extremely various: but the ideas conveyed are the same; viz. that in consequence of the sufferings of Christ, the sins of all, who repent, are remitted.



IV. Some persons may tell us, that the reason, why the scriptures speak so often of our being saved by the death of Christ, is, that his death was incurred in discharging the duties of a ministry, undertaken for the promotion of present virtue, and future happiness. I answer, that the same may be said of Stephen, Paul, or of any of the christian martyrs. Yet it is not said of them, that they have "washed us from our sins, in their own blood."

Lastly. You may imagine, perhaps, that the reason, why so close a connexion is said in scripture to exist between human salvation and the death of Christ, is, that by that event, his doctrines, all which are of a salutary tendency, have been confirmed. The reply, which has just been made to another remark, is applicable to this; for the martyrs as much confirmed their doctrines by suffering, as did our Saviour. Both, in the same way evinced their integrity; their full belief in what they taught. But with regard to Christ, his death was far less than his resurrection, a proof of his doctrines. The former proved his own belief: the latter proved, that they received the Father's approbation. If either event, therefore, were on this account suitable to be mentioned very frequently, and very distinctly, as procuring the remission of sins, it was beyond controversy, that of the resurrection. The fact is, not only, that the language of scripture is favorable to the doctrine of atonement; but will not without great violence, admit a different explanation.

## LECTURE XIV.

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### *Atonement.*

WHATEVER wisdom there is in any constitution of government, such constitution may be liable to plausible objections. The number and speciousness of these objections may be greater in proportion, as those, who make them are ignorant of all the ends, with reference to which, the constitution was framed. A transient observer is not surprised, if in a complicated machine he sees some parts, the utility of which is not obvious. If he has confidence in the skill of the architect, it will not much perplex him, should he even observe some parts, or appendages, which have the appearance of retarding the great object, for which the machine was constructed. But suppose that object were unknown to him, any objections, which might occur against particular parts, would be of still less importance, perhaps, even of none. And if this object is but partially understood, the force of his objections will be proportionably diminished.

I now proceed to notice some of those arguments, which are brought with most confidence against the doctrine of atonement.

I. If Christ, who was himself innocent, died to procure impunity for sinners, it is said to manifest an indifference to right and wrong: It is taking punishment from those, who deserved it, and placing it on him who did not.

I answer, that whether the doctrine in question is true or false, facts, of the nature here mentioned, are daily occurring before our eyes. Men often suffer in consequence of actions in which they took no part, and to which they were not accessory. If a son, by disorderly living, involve himself in debt, his friends, to procure his relief, consent to make many sacrifices, and endure many privations. If his extravagance has produced diseases, which threaten death, they sedulously interpose their good offices, to alleviate his pains, or to prevent dissolution. In these cases, we perceive nothing which is difficult to be reconciled with the justice of divine government. Because a parent chooses to intervene between his child, and those sufferings or that infamy, to which the latter, by indiscretions or crimes, has exposed himself, no person is ever led to suspect, that the Sovereign of the universe is indifferent to right and wrong. In like manner, if an angel should choose to submit to some privations or positive pain with a view to alleviate the temporal sufferings of men, or meliorate the present condition of human society, it would enter the mind of no person, that the existence of such a fact was, in the smallest degree, discordant with divine impartiality and justice. But even were this matter attended with much difficulty, whatever mode of proceeding is adopted in one part of divine government, may doubtless be admitted into another. If, in that part of the divine economy, which is known to us, the innocent endure anxiety and labor to relieve the guilty; we can by no means be sure, that the same does not take place in those parts which are unknown. It is perfectly absurd, to say, that such a thing cannot be true, because it is inconsistent with the character of God, if there are other things in his government of a like nature. If, therefore, it is an obvious fact, that the sufferings of the rash and dissolute are relieved, or that such persons have health and comfort restored to them by the intervention of those, who took no part in their crimes, how can a reasonable man deny, that the salvation of sinners may be procured by the labors, or sufferings of Messiah?

If this most benevolent and exalted being chose to divest himself of original glory, and to die the just for the unjust; is the divine character liable to impeachment, because nothing was done to prevent or discourage the measure?

Besides: It is a fact, as we have before observed, that Jesus Christ did suffer. He suffered then either for himself, or for others, or for nothing. That he suffered for personal crimes, will not be asserted by any one, who believes his religion. That he suffered for nothing, is a proposition, which will as readily be rejected. There is but one alternative: He suffered on account of others.

The person objecting, will perhaps, be willing to allow this. Those who disbelieve the doctrine of atonement, do not deny, that in some general sense, Christ suffered for the advantage of men. They are not unwilling to admit, that Christ died to confirm his doctrines, and that these doctrines are calculated to promote virtue and happiness. Now, though we endeavored in preceding lectures, to show, that Christ died, not only that men might be brought to virtue and repentance; but to render it consonant with the wise government of Jehovah to accept their penitence, yet the objection under consideration, lies with no greater strength, against the last opinion, than against the other. Suppose for a moment, that our own opinion is wrong, and the other is right. Suppose, that Christ died for no other purpose, than to confirm his religion; which religion is designed to bring men to virtue, and thus prepare them for glory. It will still be true, even by the concession of those, who hold this opinion, that Christ died for the guilty: an innocent person suffered, that the guilty might not suffer, which is precisely the thing, objected against the doctrine of atonement, as showing a manifest indifference to right and wrong. It is no more true on one supposition than on the other, that punishment is taken from those, who deserve it, and placed on him who did not. Can you possibly discern any difference? As to the sufferings of Christ, there is none; nor is

there any as to his innocence. It is undeniable on either supposition, that an innocent person suffered. Nor can it be denied, that these sufferings were endured on account of the guilty. For, had not men been sinners, a religion sealed, or confirmed by the death of Christ, would not have been necessary to their reformation. If an infidel brings the objection, with design to discredit the christian religion, I answer it, by saying first, the thing objected to, is analogous to facts, constantly existing under the government of God; and, therefore, the objection no more proves, that christianity is not from God, than that the system of nature and the government of the world are not from Him. I observe secondly, that the objection has no weight, because the sufferings of Christ, were not a matter of constraint, but of choice. But if a believer in christianity brings the objection, we are no more concerned in its removal, than he: and, therefore, it is absurd for him to attempt to subvert, by such means, the doctrine in question.

Varying the objection a little, it may be said, that every accountable creature ought to be treated according to his deserts: and that the suffering of one innocent being, in place of many offenders is inconsistent with this. I answer; It is no more inconsistent with this, than with the exercise of mercy in general. It is implied in the idea of mercy, that he, who is the subject of it, is not treated as severely, as he deserves. If that which is asserted in the objection, is true, I apprehend it fixes the doom of our whole guilty race. That they have sinned, is incontrovertible. If they must be treated according to their desert, they must endure the penalties of a violated law.

Should any reply be made to this, it must be, that human offences do not deserve punishment; or that obedience in one instance, makes amends for disobedience in others. I rejoin, that both these propositions are contradictory to the divine law.

1. Were it true that human offences do not deserve pun-

ment, the divine law is calculated to deceive mankind by threatening a punishment, which cannot, without injustice, be inflicted: for it would be unjust to punish sin, if such punishment is unmerited. Nor is this all. If what is here asserted, is true, either the law misrepresents the divine character, or that character itself is wanting in moral purity. Nearly the same consequences will result from the other suggestion, viz. that obedience in one instance makes amends for disobedience in others. This, no more than the other opinion, is contradictory to the law of God. Nor can any rule of rectitude be conceived, to which this suggestion may be reconciled.

It is objected, that the doctrine of atonement is inconsistent with our best ideas of divine mercy: for if God has received compensation for the offences of men, his not inflicting punishment from them is no indication of compassion or liberality.

If it were correct to represent the sacrifice of Christ, as perfectly analogous to the payment of a debt; and that this measure originated with Christ, and not with the Father, the objection, perhaps, could not easily be removed: for when a debt is paid, he, to whom it was owed, has no further demands; and gratitude seems exclusively due to him, by whom payment was made.

But this representation is not sanctioned by the scriptures. They speak of the Father, as originating the constitution of atonement: and they describe the atonement, as that, through the medium of which grace is so exercised, that the sinner's pardon may be accompanied with a declaration of the divine pleasure against sin: that "God may be just, and the justifier of him, that believeth." Now, it can surely derogate nothing from the riches of divine liberality, that in the manner of exercising it, wisdom is employed, and precautions are taken to prevent abuse. It were strange indeed, if the generosity of a prince must be questioned, because it is not an unqualified, random generosity, but exhibited in company with discretion and foresight.

But the fact is, that the atonement of Christ is not only consistent with liberality on the part of God; but serves eminently to display such liberality.

So far as the justice of divine requirements are questionable, it is equally questionable, whether any favor is shown to those, who are not punished for violating such requirements.

But should the transgressors of law be pardoned on the sole condition of repentance; especially if it were done frequently, suspicions would be entertained, that a perception of undue severity in the law was the real occasion of this lenity. Whatever, therefore, tends to show the justice of divine requirements; whatever tends to magnify the law, and make it honorable, tends, in the same degree, to exhibit and illustrate the liberality of God, in pardoning those, by whom its requirements have been violated. The pardon of every penitent is virtually attended with a declaration, both on the part of God and man, that the divine commands are holy and just. The penitent himself, makes this declaration by believing on him, "who died the just for the unjust." The Deity makes this declaration by accepting his penitence exclusively on the ground of our Lord's interposition. Indeed, the language of the transaction and the language of the divine law, unite perfectly in this; viz. to express the sentiments of Deity as to moral evil. According to the opinions of those, who reject the doctrine of atonement, there were no obstacles to the exercise of divine mercy. Whereas, according to the sentiment, which we endeavor to establish, these obstacles were such, as to require for their removal, the intervention of the Son of God.

To pardon sinners, where there was nothing to render the measure difficult, is obviously a less display of generosity, than to pardon them, when the removal of great obstacles was previously required. The doctrine in question, therefore, far from depressing, tends directly to raise our ideas of divine liberality.

Facts, it is believed, well correspond with this reasoning. The strongest expressions of personal demerit, and the most lively views of our Creator's benignity and grace, are not found among those, who, considering repentance alone as the ground of pardon, reject the opinions, for which we contend.

III. It is further said, in opposition to the doctrine of atonement, that were it true, it would have been revealed in the Jewish scriptures.

Without conceding, that the Jewish scriptures are silent as to this subject, I observe, that were they entirely so, it would prove, neither that the doctrine is false, nor unimportant. We are far from being judges, how many subjects will be elucidated by a divine revelation. The works of nature are as truly a communication from God, as are the Jewish scriptures. Yet in this communication, many subjects of acknowledged moment, are left in perfect uncertainty. Now, suppose further light should be imparted by immediate revelation, who could predict what portion of the darkness, remaining after the first, would by this be removed?

The objection is susceptible of another answer. In the writings of Moses, I mean the first five books of scripture, nothing is distinctly said, as to the doctrine of a future state. Let them be subjected to the most scrupulous examination, this doctrine will not there find direct and prominent evidence, to support it. But is the doctrine of a future state either untrue, or unimportant? Is it not generally considered as lying at the very foundation of all religion? Now if God was pleased to make a revelation, of which this doctrine was no part, with what confidence can we infer, either the falsity or insignificance of any other doctrine, because it makes no part of this revelation?

But even in the four gospels, it is objected, that much less is said of atonement, than we should be justified in expecting, if the doctrine held so important a place in the christian system, as is commonly supposed.



previously to the event, that atonement was about to be made for sin by the sufferings of an innocent person, they would, I apprehend, have been quite unable to determine any thing, as to the dignity of the person, by whom these sufferings were to be endured. Yet, so far as we can judge, they would have thought it probable, that some illustrious being would be thus employed. Such a one would seem less, than others, inadequate to so great and extraordinary an undertaking. We cannot depend, however, on any reasonings *a priori*; but must form our conclusions, wholly from the declarations of scripture. This testimony is, that in Jesus Christ, "dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily:" that Jesus Christ "is over all, God blessed forevermore." Of him it has been said, "Thou, Lord, hast in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands." As it is not possible for Deity to suffer; and as our Saviour said many things of himself, which can be predicated only of created nature, we are led to believe, that eternal Deity and created nature were, in a mysterious manner, united in the character of Jesus Christ. Unless there had been some important reason for it, we cannot suppose, that this union would have taken place. We must conclude, therefore, that such union was necessary to the great work, which our Saviour accomplished.

I close this lecture with a very few remarks.

I. I desire you to reflect and to feel that the subject is of general interest. You are not to imagine, that disquisitions of this nature belong exclusively to instructors in theology. So far from it they are of no consequence to them, unless they are so to you. There are many things, which are peculiar to men of particular ages, and professions. But depravity, is what all men hold in common. Without mercy, therefore, we must all perish. If a Redeemer died for human offences, he died for you: and the divine law will be honored either by your suffering the penalty, or by your acceding to those terms, on which, through Christ Jesus, a free remission is offered.

II. The doctrine, we have been discussing, is calculated to raise our ideas of the importance of man. The degrees of pleasure and pain, of which we are now susceptible, are not, indeed, inconsiderable. In what measure, our capacities for either may hereafter be enlarged, we are unable to determine. But unless the whole sum of misery, or enjoyment, reserved for each human soul, were exceedingly great, we can hardly imagine, that the Son of God would have been offered up, as a propitiatory sacrifice.

III. Having already had occasion to observe, how much the doctrine, which we have been considering, tends to exalt our views of the riches of divine grace, I shall only subjoin, that it tends no less to display the moral turpitude of sin. God, though almighty, and omniscient, having a perfect knowledge of the universe, and having all means at his command, could devise no method less expensive, in which to exercise mercy. How malignant the nature of sin, if pardon could be offered on no easier terms: and with how much vigilance should we guard against that, which thus tends to spread dishonor, injury, confusion, and pain, through the empire of God.

## LECTURE XV.

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### *Regeneration.*

AMONG those, who believe christianity, there is no considerable discrepancy of opinion, as to the doctrine of regeneration. Perhaps, from this circumstance, you have been led to conclude, either that the passages, which are thought to support this doctrine, are unimportant, or that they have a meaning, so evanescent and subtile, as to elude investigation.

I am persuaded however, that you cannot, on reflection, be wholly satisfied with this conclusion. There are questions without number, concerning medicine, philosophy, commerce, philology, and politics, which, after being severely examined, have by different men, been variously answered. No person hence infers, that these questions are of no moment. Nor can it be rationally supposed, that our Saviour, when acknowledged by Nicodemus, and applied to, as a teacher, sent from God, would have amused the applicant with some unimportant, or subtile speculation; less still, that he would, with much solemnity, have made a reply, which meant nothing.

There is another point of view, in which you will perceive strong reasons for coming to some conclusion on this subject. If it should be found, after sufficient scrutiny, that the doctrine mentioned, has nothing in it of high import, you will be secured from that damp, which the mention of it has,

I doubt not, occasionally thrown upon your spirits. But if, on the contrary, it should appear, that the opinion, which has commonly prevailed on the subject, is substantially correct, and a radical change in the human character is indispensable to salvation; you cannot need to be informed, how much it is for your interest, not only to view the doctrine in a clear light, but likewise to experience that transformation, which it implies.

When this and other theological subjects are discussed, let it be remembered, that I ask you to take nothing merely on my assertion. Opinions in divinity, let them come from whom they may, if not supported by reason, scripture, or both, are not entitled to your belief.

But while it is conceded to be irrational, absurd, and dangerous to believe without evidence; it is not less so to withhold assent, when sufficient evidence is afforded. A man, who should deny the existence of such rivers, as the Nile, and the Danube, because he had not seen them, would act in a manner, as little becoming a rational creature, as he, who should heed the vagaries of every fanatic.

Whatever is the meaning of regeneration, that much is said of it in the scriptures, cannot be denied.

When a ruler of the Jews, convinced by miracles, that Jesus was Messiah, came to receive instruction, Jesus said to him, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Those, who believe on the name of Christ, are said by the evangelist, to be "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Those, to whom St. Peter wrote, are said to have "purified their souls by obeying the truth, through the Spirit: and to be born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." It is asserted in the 1st epistle of John, ii. 29. "He, that doeth righteousness, is born of God." Again, "whosoever is born of God, sinneth not." And further, "whosoever is born of God, overcometh the world."

There are many other places, in which different words are used; but where the thing intended is evidently the same. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away; and all things have become new." christians are said to be "created in Christ Jesus, unto good works:" and they, who love christians, because they are such, are said to "have passed from death unto life."

The passages quoted, have doubtless, some import. To suppose, that our Saviour spake, and his apostles wrote, without meaning, would be a reproach to them, than which a greater can scarcely be conceived.

We can think of no more direct way of ascertaining this import, than to consider what stands in connexion with the term.

I. In the passage, cited from the 3d of John, regeneration is connected with "seeing the kingdom of God." This term, "kingdom of God," it must be allowed, is sometimes used to signify christianity itself, or the christian church. And, while we consider the term merely, we are not at liberty to assert, that such may not be its meaning in this place.

II. St. Peter connects regeneration with "obeying the truth through the spirit." Obeying the truth is synonymous with obeying the commands of God, or maintaining a holy life. In this he accords with St. John, who asserts, in passages, already noticed, that "he, who doeth righteousness, is born of God: and that he, who is born of God, sinneth not."

III. Regeneration is connected with victory over the world. "He, that is born of God, overcometh the world."

IV. Regeneration is connected, as effect and cause, with the influence of the holy Spirit. By a regenerate person, our Saviour evidently means "every one, that is born of the Spirit."

V. Regeneration is connected with eternal life. "The righteous," says our Savior, "shall go away into life eternal. Now, "the righteous," by St. John's definition, "is he, that doeth righteousness: and he that doeth righteousness," according to the passage already cited, "is born of God."

The way is now prepared for inquiring more directly into the nature of that change, which is implied in regeneration.

I. Does this term express nothing more, than a transition from paganism or judaism to the profession of christianity?

This was indeed no inconsiderable change. "It was," to use the words of a late, interesting writer, "a new name, a new language, a new society; a new faith, a new hope, a new object of worship, a new rule of life; a history was disclosed, full of discovery and surprize; a prospect of futurity was unfolded, beyond imagination awful and august. The same description applies in a great part, though not entirely, to the conversion of a Jew."

This was so remarkable a period in a man's life, such a revolution of every thing, that was important to him, as might, according to the opinion of some, even though no moral change were implied, admit those strong figures, and significant allusions, by which it is described in scripture: It was a regeneration, a new creature, a translation from the condition of slaves to that of sons; it was to be born again of God and the Spirit. (Paley's Sermon.)

I acknowledge, that part of these figurative terms might have been used, had the change contemplated been no greater, than is here supposed: though others, I think, could not.

It is a maxim, that two things, which have not similar relations to a third, are not similar. Let us examine, then, whether such a change, as is here described, has the same relation, which regeneration has to other objects.

Regeneration, we have seen, is connected with obedience to the commands of God,—with the doing of righteousness. Whatever change, therefore, is not connected with the doing of righteousness, is not regeneration. But a transition from paganism, or judaism, to a profession of christianity does not necessarily imply obedience, or the doing of righteousness: witness Judas Iscariot and Simon the sorcerer: witness many gentile converts, who in times of persecution,

reverted to paganism, and, to prove themselves real apostates, execrated the Lord who bought them.

But even could no examples be named, it would hardly be asserted, I think, that merely a profession of christianity, whether the person, making it, had been Jew or pagan, is the same thing, as the doing of righteousness, or obedience to the truth. Men of all descriptions, whether the friends, or the enemies of religion, are ready to acknowledge, that obedience does not always accompany a good profession.

Again, for the same reason, that obedience and regeneration are connected, the latter is connected with eternal life. No change, therefore, which does not ensure eternal life, is regeneration. But the abandonment of either the pagan, or the Jewish religion for a profession of christianity, gives no such security. Many shall say unto Christ in the great day, "Lord, Lord, have we not eaten and drunk in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works," to whom he shall answer, saying, "I know you not, whence ye are: Depart from me, ye, that work iniquity."

St. Peter speaks of some christian professors, whose lives were marked by fraud and voluptuousness. What profit to them that they had abandoned heathen ceremonies, heathen temples, and heathen gods? What profit to them, that they had been joined to a new society; that they had acknowledged a new faith, a new rule of life, and a new object of worship? So far were these circumstances from securing their salvation, they did not even leave their danger unaltered. In consequence of the change, which had taken place in their external condition, their character became more criminal, and their danger more imminent. This follows from a principle, repeatedly taught by our Saviour, namely, that the criminality of unbelief is proportionable to the light resisted. "If I had not come, and done among them the works, which no other man did, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin."

The cities, which were made the theatre of his mighty works, are represented, as incurring a more intolerable doom, than the most abandoned of those, whose ignorance was greater.

Should it be objected here, that our Saviour, in the passages cited, is speaking of unbelief, or a rejection of christianity, and not of those, who had embraced it, I should answer, if it be so highly criminal to withhold belief, when evidence is exhibited, it cannot be less criminal to withhold obedience in opposition to those motives, which this evidence affords. The unreclaimed professor of christianity was therefore, more offensive to God, and less qualified for his kingdom of glory, than he was, while a pagan; before that change in his external circumstances had been produced, which some persons are so willing to denominate regeneration.

II. Is the term regeneration designed to express intellectual improvement, or enlargement of intellectual powers? To determine this, we must, as before, consider whether both these have the same relations. Were the intellects of a sinner enlarged, or more highly cultivated, would he certainly obey the truth, and work righteousness? or would he certainly partake in a joyful retribution? for both these, we have seen, are connected with that change, which is produced in the character of the regenerate. Of such it is likewise said, that they overcome the world. Now, it is extremely evident, that moral attainments are by no means proportionate either to the native powers of the mind, or to the cultivation bestowed on them. Many individuals of piercing intellects, of profound erudition, and much theoretical knowledge of christian theology, have been openly and flagrantly dissolute in their lives; and therefore eminently exposed to the indignation of Heaven. Instead of obeying the truth, they have either denied or disgraced it. Instead of overcoming the world, they have habitually and without a struggle, endured its bondage.

III. Does regeneration mean simply an external reforma-



tion in morals? That many have need of such a change, will be generally, and readily acknowledged. The volatile should become sedate; the fraudulent, honest; the indolent, industrious; the discontented should become quiet; the profane must alter their language; and the intemperate abandon the inebriating draught.

All this is well: but is this all, which is implied in overcoming the world? Is nothing more, than this, comprehended in a holy life? Is this to be born of God and his Spirit? Is the saints' inheritance, the crown of life, made sure to all who possess the character, implied in such a reformation? The young nobleman, whose application to Christ is recorded in the Gospel, appears not, in the particulars mentioned, to have needed reforming; and, therefore, must have been, at least, as well qualified for a future state of reward, as any, in whom such a reformation merely has been produced. Yet this person was not fit for the kingdom of God; he had not that character, which was connected with eternal life; he was, therefore, not regenerate.

But you will ask, perhaps with some ardour, if to be born again, does not mean reformation, what import has the phrase; and what value can be attached to the thing itself?

I answer, that reformation, where the character has been previously immoral, is without question, comprehended in that change, which is called a new birth: all, which I assert, is, that external reformation does not necessarily imply that change.

Should a person, who has for a long time been your open enemy, become your friend, he would doubtless alter his language. But barely an alteration in his language, and even an alteration in his general treatment of you, would not amount to that, which is implied in his becoming your friend. External actions, in themselves considered, are nothing, but organical motions. There is neither friendship nor enmity, in the cast of the eyes; in the motion of the tongue, the hands or the feet. These motions are important only, as the indications of a friendly, or an un-

friendly disposition. And the very same external acts are, under different circumstances, and with regard to different persons, an indication of opposite qualities. The kiss, by which Judas saluted Christ, was a proof of deadly hatred; though in a similar way, parents often express their tender affection.

Suppose now, that a person, heretofore immoral, becomes industrious, sober, and circumspect. This is, indeed, what would have taken place, had there been a change of disposition: but it is what may take place, where there has been no such change. At all events, the two things are as perfectly distinct, as are ideas in the mind from sound, or from characters, inscribed on marble, or parchment. Yet no person, who means to speak with accuracy, would indentify a book, or letter, with the moral character of its author. The book or the letter is one thing:—his moral character is another. Nor is the difference less between external amendment and moral feelings. Yet nothing is certainly connected with eternal life, but rectitude of moral feelings; and it has been shown, that regeneration is connected with eternal life. Therefore, external amendment and regeneration are not the same.

We have now proved, that neither external amendment, nor the increase or cultivation of the intellects, nor a transition from judaism or paganism to a profession of christianity, is regeneration. What then must this term imply? Must it not imply a change of heart, or, if you please, a change of temper or disposition?

We will now attend more particularly to the conference, which our Saviour had with Nicodemus. The history is this. "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. The same came to Jesus by night, and said, we know, that thou art a teacher, sent from God; for no man can do these miracles, which thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus, evidently

supposing, that our Lord meant a natural birth, saith, "How can a man be born, when he is old?" Jesus explains himself. "Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That, which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. The wind bloweth where it listeth; and thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one, that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered, How can these things be? Jesus answered, Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?"

On these words I repeat a remark, already made, viz. that this language must have some meaning; and further, that this meaning ought to have been known to the Jewish instructors. Christ considered it, as a reproach to Nicodemus, that the latter *did not understand* what these things meant.

From Selden, as quoted by Whitby, it appears, that proselytes to the Jewish religion were considered, *as children new born*. This might be said, either on account of the great change of circumstances and relations, implied in passing from paganism into the Jewish church; or on account of a correspondent moral change, which the proselyte was supposed to experience. That our Saviour could not have meant the former, will be evident from a little reflection. To what purpose would it have been for Nicodemus to be told, that the difference was great between the external circumstances of a pagan, and those of a Jew? The Jews were so far from needing to be informed of this, that they boasted of this difference, and of their consequent superiority.

Suppose now, that our Lord had not reference to that change in external circumstances, implied in passing from paganism into the Jewish church; but the change, implied in passing from the Jewish into the christian church. Against this opinion, in addition to the reasons already suggested, there are the following in particular.

1. It was by no means our Saviour's method to display in

striking colours the difference between the external profession of his religion, and the same profession of Judaism.

II. If such were our Saviour's design, we can see little or no meaning, that can be attached to the term spirit, in the following passage ; "that which is born of the flesh, is flesh : that which is born of the spirit, is spirit:" nor can we perceive any import in the comparison, which he used. "Thou hearest the sound of the wind: but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one, that is born of the Spirit."

It is likewise scarcely possible, I think, that Nicodemus should have expressed so great astonishment, as he continued to express, had our Saviour meant nothing more, than that persons, under the Messiah's reign, would enjoy light, and be placed in circumstances, different from those, previously existing.

Let us now suppose, that when the Jews spoke of a proselyte to their religion, *as a child new born*, the more intelligent and devout of them understood a moral change, corresponding with that which was external; or that both were comprehended in the same expression. In support of this supposition, we have the authority of Michaelis, who tells us, that "to be born again in the language of the Rabbins, signified to be accepted of God, as a son of Abraham, and, by following the example of his faith, to become worthy of that title." They, who hold this opinion, must have thought, as did the apostle, that "He is not a Jew, who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly: and circumcision is that of heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Supposing our Saviour discoursed of a moral change, a renovation of the heart, the whole conference will be quite intelligible.

I. Such a change is represented in other parts of scrip-

ture, already cited, as necessary to eternal life, or an entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

II. As the meaning conveyed is vastly more important, on that supposition, than on any other, we more easily see, why so strong a figure should be used. For a bad man to become a good one, is a much greater alteration, than that which is made in changing from one profession, or community to another.

III. As there are, in this life, those, whom the Scriptures denominate ungodly, and those, whom they term righteous; punishment being reserved for the one, and reward for the other conversion from sin to piety must be of all things most important. It was therefore, perfectly natural, that Jesus Christ, should have introduced this subject to one, by whom he was acknowledged, as a teacher, sent from God.

IV. This change of moral feelings,—this melioration of character, is, with much frequency, in the Scriptures, attributed to divine agency: and therefore, what our Lord says of being *born of the Spirit*, and being born from above, is perfectly intelligible.

Lastly. The supposition, now adopted, justifies the reproof, received by Nicodemus from our Saviour, “Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?” Terms were used among them, we have seen, which expressed a change of character,—a melioration of heart. And if the highest import of these terms were not discerned by those who used them, namely, by the Jewish doctors, it must have proceeded from a criminal inattention to their own scriptures: for in these, we find numerous passages, in which, such a change, and the influence of God in producing it, are unequivocally recognized. Such were the words of Moses, “The Lord, thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed to love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.”

Such were the words of the royal Psalmist; “Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me.” Of a

similar import were the divine promises, communicated by the mouth of the prophets; "I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They shall return unto me with all their heart. This is the covenant, that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts."

All, that we have as yet attempted to prove, you will observe, is, that regeneration implies a moral change. The subject in general is reserved for further discussion.

## LECTURE XVI.

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### *Regeneration.*

It having been already shown, that the change implied in regeneration, is of a moral nature, we are interested to ascertain who they are, for whom it is necessary.

I. That heathen were of this number, will probably be conceded without reluctance. Concerning the moral state of the pagan world in general, when christianity was introduced, there can be but one opinion. The same testimony is given by historians, poets, and the inspired writers. The Gentiles were not indeed without religion; but theirs was such a religion, as imposed little or no restraint on the passions and vices of men; nor could it be otherwise, considering the character of those beings, whom they worshipped as God;—beings, by whose quarrels the heavens were perpetually disturbed, and by whose impunities the earth was polluted.

To describe pagan profligacy in the words of their own satirists, would be highly indecorous. We will use the less offensive language of St. Paul. "As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, he gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do those things, which were not convenient: being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness: full of murder, debate, deceit, malignity; back biters, haters of God, spiteful,

proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who, knowing the judgments of God, that they, who commit such things, are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them, that do them."

That all to whom this language applies, have need of being *transformed*, of being *created anew*, is a truth, which will find little opposition, either from the understanding, or the prejudices of any. In view of this subject, no one is surprised at the language of the apostle's commission, when sent among the Gentiles; "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Here, it is relieved by many, may be found a satisfactory explanation of those strongly figurative passages of scripture, by which change of character is expressed. What wonder it may be asked, if persons, thus irrational in all religious sentiments, ignorant of God, and degraded by vice, should be told, that if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away and all things have become new?" What wonder, that such sinners were said to possess a *carnal mind*; and to be *dead in trespasses and sins*; and that those, who reformed their lives agreeably to the precepts of christian morality, were said to be quickened, i. e. raised from the dead?

I answer, that in all this there is no cause of wonder. I want too, that some of these expressions do appear to refer specially to converts from paganism. Such persons were, in a peculiar sense, *new creatures*. That change of disposition, produced in them, was accompanied by an alteration of externals, far more striking, than usually attends conversion in a christian country. Certain descriptions of the change, produced in Gentiles, by their reception of Christ to their hearts, when applied to the regeneration of those, who have from their youth been instructed in christianity, and decently restrained by its moral precepts, have not precisely their original applicability.



But let us inquire, for a moment, in what that change principally consisted, which qualified a Gentile for salvation. Agreeably to what was shown in the last lecture, it could not have consisted in the great accession of light, which was conveyed to his intellects. This had, in truth, no connexion with salvation further, than it tended either to produce, or cherish, correct moral dispositions. In the production of these, and not in the augmentation of light, principally consisted regeneration, when pagans were the subjects. Not only were they not conformed, in *sentiment*, to the age, in which they lived, but were *renewed in the spirit of their minds*. It is, therefore, evident,

II. That all, whose moral state is no better, have need of a change, substantially the same. A proposition, so clearly resulting from undeniable premises, you will, I presume, feel no unwillingness to admit. Should you make it a question, whether there are, in christian countries, any, whose moral character and feelings are no better than were the heathen in general, the matter may, without much difficulty, be decided. Though the general standard of morals, is doubtless, much higher in countries, where revelation is enjoyed, than among pagans, either of ancient or modern times, (and this circumstance will render the same practices more criminal in one case, than in the other,) there are few, very few heathen crimes, which have not been occasionally perpetrated in christian countries. There are not a few individuals, it should seem, therefore, whose external deportment affords no contrast, when compared with that of pagan profligates. But the same degree of external profligacy is, by no means, necessary to prove the same depravity of heart. Where the relations of man to his Maker, and the duties, thence resulting, are well understood, men cannot sin with so little danger and so little crime, as where through the want of instruction, all the common sentiments on morality are uncertain, perplexed, and inconsistent. There may be very many among us, therefore, externally practising none of those

vices, for which the Gentiles were infamous; and yet, in the divine estimation, no less guilty than they. This appears evident from that declaration of our Saviour, which we have once mentioned, concerning the cities, where his miraculous power was exerted, and his preaching enjoyed. It cannot be supposed, that their immoralities surpassed those of Sodom and Gomorrah: yet is it declared, that the punishment of the latter, in the final judgment, will be less severe.

It follows then, that if a moral change were so necessary for Gentiles, that without it they could not be saved; the same change is equally necessary not only for those among ourselves, who emulate pagan crimes, but for many, in whose deportment there is far more decency,

Further, it is no uncommon thing for persons to betray, on particular occasions, a baseness of disposition, which, during the whole course of their past lives, had lain concealed, and which, but for those occasions would never have been discovered. It is by no means certain, therefore, but that some, whose lives are marked by no striking disorder, possess a degree of depravity, not inferior to that of pagans.

III. Without making any comparison between the state of morals among nominal christians, and those, who are ignorant of revelation, it will be allowed, I suppose, that all, who live in the habitual violations of christian precepts, have need of a new disposition, i. e. of a renewed heart. "Know ye not," saith the apostle, "that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Those, who practise falsehood, and are accustomed to profane language, may, without question, be added to the number.

Does it not already appear, that the necessity of regeneration is not confined to a few? Are the sins, now mentioned, the exclusive opprobrium of the heathen world? Are impure and profane persons so rare, as to excite wonder?

Is the use of oaths an offence, as novel or singular, as it is revolting to every virtuous mind, and offensive to God? Are intemperence and reviling, covetousness and extortion, crimes, which are heard of but a few times, in one's whole life? Yet the scriptures assure us, that any one of these vices designates its votaries, as unregenerate; as unfit for the kingdom of God.

IV. The change contemplated is necessary for all, on whose minds religious considerations make no deep, nor habitual impression.

When we revolve in our minds the principles and discoveries of revealed religion; that there is a God, whose power created and sustains the universe,—that this Being, has goodness, wisdom and justice, equal to his power,—that, as he had design in the structure of every leaf and of every pebble, much rather had he design in the formation of human souls,—that he has declared his purpose of eternally supporting every human soul, to which existence is given, and of treating all through an endless succession of ages, agreeably to the moral qualities, which they possess on earth: when we consider, that the Son of God, agreeably to a series of prophecy, extending through the space of four thousand years, descended from heaven to enlighten and reform the world, and to make atonement for sin,—that this glorious personage will pass judgment on our race, assigning to the righteous and the wicked, rewards and punishments, which have neither intermission, nor end;—when we reflect, that these things are generally believed, or at least, are not denied after any serious investigation, it will appear that levity or inattention to religion, evinces a state of heart, not radically different from theirs, whose conduct is decidedly immoral. It is easy, I well know, to apply the epithet, *innocent* to a heedless life and heedless actions: but the application is as little justified by reason, as it is by the unchangeable oracles of God. Can we be innocent, in treating with indifference that message, which the only wise God

deemed of sufficient import to justify the mission of his Son from heaven? Have the Creator's wisdom, and goodness, and power, been employed from the period of original apostacy unto the present day, in forming and executing the scheme of redemption; and does it imply no criminality in those, for whom this redemption was intended, to live a gay, a vacant, or unmeaning life, as if time were their only existence, and earth their only theatre? Were an ambassador sent on business, which involved the prosperity, and the very being of the state, from which he was sent, to spend the time assigned him in low pursuits and trifling amusements, regardless of the object entrusted to him, would it be a valid defence, to plead, that he had violated no laws, that he had excited no rebellion, that he had formed no designs against the state?

Allowing all this to be true, would he deserve to escape punishment? Yet the interests of one immortal spirit are evidently greater, than the political interests of a state, or of the whole world.

V. Regeneration is a change, necessary for all those, who are incapable of enjoying the kingdom of God.

Though all sensitive beings are susceptible of happiness from some source or other, they are not all susceptible of it from the same sources. The same employment, which is grateful to one, is to another wearisome and disgusting. The same state of the atmosphere, which invigorates one animal body, is attended in regard to another, with torpor, pain, or death. Some cannot live in the air, while others die without it. The fishes of the sea would be agonized on fields of grass, in gardens of fruit, or citron groves; while quadrupeds would exult on the one, and human beings be regaled by the other.

To confine ourselves to our own species, how diverse, and even opposite, are the sources of human enjoyment. To some military men, no life seems worth possessing, but that of the camp or the field; other persons as ardently love the

ocean. By most people, both these are equally dreaded. A statesman, inured to political discussion, and habitually warmed, either by success, or opposition, takes no pleasure in the society of those, who are absorbed in mathematical or moral inquiries : while the latter can think of no subjects, on which the mind fixes itself with so much readiness and satisfaction.

To be susceptible of happiness from any object or employment, a taste for that object or employment is requisite. Now, all the happiness, which will be enjoyed by human beings after death, will result from the same society and the same employments. The society will consist of just men, made perfect, of angels, of Jesus, the mediator, and God, the judge of all. The employment will be contemplation of the divine character, as displayed in the works and purposes of God ; from these will naturally result thanksgiving and adoration. All therefore, to whose happiness, such society and such employments would not contribute, are incapable of seeing, i. e. of enjoying the kingdom of God. It is evident then, that all such persons have need of a moral change, or, in other words, of being *renewed in the spirit of their minds*. I request you to consider, whether there can be any fallacy in this argument : whether the case be not as plain, as any, which can be proposed for human consideration. For my own part, I know of no proposition in Euclid, the demonstration of which is more satisfactory, and more irresistible, than the conclusion, which has now been drawn. Were it possible, therefore, to ascertain, who are incapable of relishing such society and such employments, as have been described, it would be easy to indicate those, who need to be regenerated. This, indeed, is not possible : no one can infallibly know the heart of another. Yet it will require no labored investigation to be convinced, that a capacity for celestial enjoyments is, by no means, common. All, who are at present, averse from those exercises and that society, which most resemble the society and employments of heaven, must, of course, be

disqualified to enjoy the latter. Nothing, so far as we can judge, so much resembles the life of glorified saints, as prayer, religious contemplation, and converse with those, who are most eminent for their piety. If these were generally relished, there would be reason to doubt, or rather good reason for denying the assertion, just made, that a capacity for celestial enjoyments is by no means common. If you, yourselves, can deliberately and truly say, that your highest enjoyments result from devotional duties, pious conversation and from viewing the justice, benevolence, and purity of God, you are not now among those, for whom a radical change of heart is requisite; but, if the case be so clearly the reverse, that you dare not, or do not need to examine it, the inference can neither be denied, nor concealed.

I am now, in the last place, to show that the change, of which I have been speaking, is necessary for all the intelligent offspring of Adam. You will observe, however, that the truth of what has been already said, does, in no degree, depend on the success of this attempt. What has been already proved will forever remain true, even if it be impossible to show, that *all* the intelligent descendants of Adam need to be regenerated. That this is not impossible, however, I shall now endeavor to make apparent.

In doing this, it is obvious to remark, that the words, which our Saviour used in his conversation with Nicodemus, have no appearance of being confined to any portion of our race. It is not said, "Except a heathen be born again," nor, "Except an extravagant profligate be born again," but "Except any man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

All those passages which show the depravity of the human character, are to our present purpose; it will therefore be necessary to cite a number of texts, which were formerly used in proof of that doctrine.

Moses informs us, in the eighth chapter of Genesis, that the Lord said in his heart, "I will not again curse the ground

for man's sake: for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Of those strong passages in the sixth chapter, asserting, that "every imagination of man's heart is evil continually," it may be plausibly said, that they describe not the character of mankind, but of that generation, which the flood destroyed: a limitation, which cannot be applied to these words in the eighth chapter. They relate not to any detachment of men, but to the whole mass.

That moral corruption is common to the whole species, appears from the following words, "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost:" again, "The Son of man came into the world to save sinners;" it being likewise asserted, that he "tasted death for every man, and gave his life for the world." It appears then, that our Lord's coming had relation to the whole human race. But if so, and the object of it were to save sinners, it follows, that all men were of this character. And further, as the design of his coming is said to have been the salvation of them, that were lost, it follows, that ruin was the common condition of man;—a moral ruin, exposing him to the loss of the soul.

Further, Christ speaks of the world, as hostile to his religion. "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth: because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." Here are two important assertions; 1. That the works of mankind are evil; 2. That they hated Christ for exhibiting this truth.

They, who follow the example of Christ, are said to be a community acting on moral principles, differing from those which influence the world in general. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." In connexion with this, Christ respects an idea, already noticed, namely, that there is hostility between the world and his disciples, "I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them." The same sentiment is often conveyed in the same words. The least, that can possibly be meant by such language is, that the general current of human feelings is less favorable

to christians on account of their religion. But so far, as christians obey their religion, they resemble their master, and him, by whom their master was sent. Considering what was shown under the last particular, viz. that the gospel declares all men to be sinners, even in so high a degree, as to be exposed to perdition, it seems unreasonable to limit the term world in preceding passages, in which Christ speaks of the world's enmity to his religion; or to suppose, that none are comprehended by it, but certain individuals of uncommon depravity.

Again. That infernal being, to whom the scriptures give the name Satan, is called *the god of this world*. His devotees are therefore, the inhabitants of this world. It would be easy to show that not an evil principle merely, but an intelligent agent is here meant. But let it, if you please, be conceded for a moment, that by the term Satan is meant a principle of evil: the consequence will be no less formidable, namely, that mankind are under the influence of an evil principle; i. e. are universally involved in moral corruption.

The same opinion is very strongly supported by that well known passage in the second chapter of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians. "Among whom we all had our conversation in the world, and were by nature children of wrath, even as others." The connexion of the passage is this. In the latter part of the preceding chapter, the writer had mentioned, under the figure of a resurrection or revival, the change which had been produced in the character of the Ephesians; comparing the power, by which it was affected, to that which the Father exerted in raising Christ from the dead. By the introduction of this comparison, he is, according to his manner, led off for a moment, from his subject, and resumes it in the beginning of the second chapter, which begins thus, "And you hath he quickened, or brought unto life, who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein, in time past, ye walked according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air



the spirit, that worketh in the children of disobedience." That thus far Gentiles are meant, is conceded without controversy. It immediately follows, "Among whom we all had our conversation in time past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind: and were by nature children of wrath, even as others." Nothing can be more natural, than to understand the apostle, as speaking in this latter clause, of christians in general, comprehending both Jews and Gentiles.

The last proof, to be adduced from scripture, is found in the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans. St. Paul there considers the whole family of man, as consisting of those, who are *in the flesh*, and those who are *in the spirit*. The character of the former is, that they *mind the things of the flesh*: the character of the latter, that they *mind the things of the spirit*. It is implied further, that all would be of the former description, i. e. all would make the present world the centre of their desires and efforts, were they not the subjects of an external influence. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be the spirit of God dwelleth in you. As many, as are led by the spirit, they are the sons of God: but if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his."

It would be easy to multiply quotations of the same import: but these it is believed, render it sufficiently evident, that the necessity of regeneration is universal. This change must be experienced by those, who bend beneath the weight of cares and poverty; by those, who are encumbered with superfluous wealth. It is necessary to the young, though a thousand allurements cheat them into the disbelief of it, and for the aged, in whom the habits of sin have become inveterate. It is necessary to the refined and studious, no less than to the unlettered cultivator of the desert. It is necessary to the bold despiser of religion, and to the more cautious, restrained, and reputable sinner. It is alike necessary to

the abject slave, and to those, by whom nations are brought to slavery. Without it, "the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man," will desire to "hide themselves in the dens, and rocks, and mountains; and will say to the mountains and the rocks, fall on us, and cover us from the face of Him, that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

## LECTURE XVII.

### *Regeneration.*

Two things have been already shown ; 1. That regeneration is a moral change, and, 2. That the necessity of it is universal.

I am now to inquire, whether there be any thing irrational in attributing this change to divine agency ; then consider what is the testimony of scripture on this subject ; and lastly inquire, whether there be not, even now, many incontestable facts, of which, without the supposition of divine influence no good account can be given.

1. Is there any thing irrational in attributing to divine agency, that alteration of moral character, which in scripture language, is termed a *new birth* ?

That God should create a world, in the minutest parts of which we distinctly perceive the marks of intelligence and design, and then permit this same world to exist without any further attention from him, implies an absurdity, little, if in any degree, less glaring, than that of atheism.

If the world were worth making, it is worth preserving and superintending. If it were created for some purpose, it must, for the same, be continued : and if there be some purpose, for the accomplishment of which the world is continue-

and, it is impossible to conceive, that Deity should not exercise that influence, whatever it be, which is necessary to secure this purpose from proving abortive.

But the intellectual part of creation is far most important. In examining the history of past ages, we notice, with considerable interest, no doubt, an earthquake, the appearance of a comet, the eruption of a volcano, the formation of a new gulf, or a new island: but it is the changes, which are effected among intelligent beings;—it is national wars and revolutions, which justly engross our highest attention. These have a far more intimate connexion, than the other, with human happiness and human virtue. Now, these events are not mechanical; but all result from human choice. If therefore, God had not, either directly or indirectly, any influence on the tempers and volitions of men, he could not regulate these great events: and the Universe, so far, as its most important interests are involved, would be, in a very slight degree, if at all, under the divine control. How inconsistent such an opinion would be, not only with the most enlightened philosophy, but with the common ideas of mankind whether christian, Jewish, or pagan, it is unnecessary to show.

But most men are convinced, not only that the world in general is under a divine superintendence; but that this superintendence embraces their own circumstances, and, in some instances at least, their characters. If they are in danger, they doubt not, but Deity may by invisible agency, secure their escape. If they are in perplexity, as to the course, which will issue most advantageously, they question not the possibility of being divinely directed. Whether habituated themselves to devotion or not, they suspect no impropriety in the prayers of others, who ask of God to illuminate their understandings, to secure them from error, and to advance within them all virtuous dispositions. Few persons, I apprehend, ever imagined that the following lines of Thompson contained any thing, inconsistent with the

most rational views of the character of God, or the condition of men.

"Father of light and life; thou good supreme;  
O teach me what is good; teach me thyself;  
Save me from folly, vanity and vice,  
From every low pursuit; and feed my soul  
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure;  
Sacred, substantial, never fading bliss."

Now, the prayer, contained in this charming language, is undeniably formed on the opinion, that human virtue does, in some way or other, depend on the agency of God.

From quotations, which are often made on this subject from heathen philosophers, you are probably convinced, that such men, as Cyrus, Socrates, and Plato; and, among those of a later period, Cicero, Seneca and Simplicius, occasionally expressed sentiments, surprisingly coincident with those, generally acknowledged among believers in christianity. They acknowledged that virtue had a celestial origin. *Nemo igitur vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu divino unquam fuit.* (Sic. de nat. Deor. 128.)

It is well known, that men have a degree of influence on the moral character of each other. A man, fully determined on the commission of a crime, is sometimes diverted by the seasonable remonstrance of a friend. In a similar way, have habits of profaneness or sensuality, in some few instances, been interrupted, or effectually broken. Now, if one human agent may have some influence on the moral character of another, is it not perfectly reasonable to believe that He, who is the creator of human souls, and who has therefore a perfect knowledge of their powers and their propensities, may have on the moral character of his creatures, a far greater influence? If you can, in any degree, restrain the vices of another, is it incredible, that God, who is the Father of spirits, should eradicate those vices, or implant real virtue?

II. I am now to consider what testimony the scriptures bear, as to the subject before us.

Much is said in the Old Testament, under the form, both of promises and predictions, concerning the prevalence of

religion in future ages, especially under the reign of Messiah; and the effect is, with great clearness of language attributed to a divine influence on the heart. In the one hundred and tenth psalm, there is a promise of the Father to Christ, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." When persons are willing to acknowledge Christ, as their sovereign and to submit to his laws, they are regenerated. This voluntary subjection is, therefore, here attributed to the power of Christ.

In the prophecy of Ezekiel, is foretold a time, when the dispersed Jews shall be restored to their country and to the church of God: after which they shall cordially adhere to their covenant engagements. This is foretold, not as a matter of causality, but the effect of divine influence. "Thus saith the Lord, though I have cast them off among the heathen, and though I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them a little sanctuary in the countries, where they shall come. I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered: and I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within you: and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh."

A great number of similar passages, it is well known, are found in the prophetic writing. It will avail nothing to say, by way of objection, that as these expressions relate to the Jews; nothing can be argued from them, in regard to mankind in general: since a Jew has no aversion from piety, which is not common to our whole race. It will hardly be said after a little deliberation, that the Jew becomes virtuous in one manner, and the Gentile in another; that while the former is dependant on his Maker for an obedient heart, the latter produces one merely by his own industry.

If, however, any doubts of this nature can be entertained, on reading the Old Testament, they cannot fail to be removed, when we consult the testimony of Christ and his apostles. In the third chapter of John, to which we have repeatedly had recourse, our Saviour asserts not only the uni-

versal necessity of the change, but the universal necessity of divine power in producing it. The same unerring instructor said to the Jews, "No man can come unto me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him." Suppose, if you please, that our Saviour, in this declaration, meant nothing more, than this, that no man will, in fact believe in him, unless drawn by the Father; it will still prove, incontestably, that in whatever instances regeneration is effected, God, and not man, is to be acknowledged, as the cause.

St. James, in the first chapter of his epistle, says, "Of his own will," i. e. of God's own will, "begat he us, with the word of truth." St. Peter adopts similar language, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead." Paul, in the name of christians, gave thanks to the Father, "who had made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Now it has been shown, that none are qualified to enjoy this inheritance, but those who have been renewed. These words of the apostle do clearly assert, therefore, that renovation is the effect of divine influence. In the same apostle's letter to the Ephesians, we have the following remarkable passage. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works." Here the same idea is twice conveyed in different words: 1. That faith is the gift of God; and 2. That believers are a divine workmanship; the effect of a divine, transforming power. Repentance is an exercise of the renewed heart: this too, the apostle represents, as the effect of divine operation. For, speaking of the opposers of christianity, he says, If God peradventure *will give them repentance* to the acknowledgement of the truth.

The moral change produced in the Ephesian converts. St. Paul mentions not only as the effect of divine energy, but as an effect of such magnitude, as to resemble the raising of our Lord from the dead. It is called *the exceeding greatness of God's power*.

To the same cause, are we taught to ascribe the perseverance of saints. They are not less dependent on God than they were before they assumed that character. They are "kept by the power of God through faith to salvation."

To avoid the conclusion, so naturally resulting from these and similar passages, it has been alledged, that by the Spirit, is meant nothing more, than the scriptures, which are given by inspiration. Persons are said to be born of the Spirit, we are sometimes told, when the word of God has such influence on them, as to lead them to a life of piety, though no direct agency of the Spirit is employed.

It is indeed true, that Paul says to the Corinthians, "I have begotten you through the Gospel;" and the church is said to "be cleansed and sanctified by the word." But neither of these expressions excludes the agency of the Spirit. It is not doubted, that the instructions of christianity are important instruments of conversion. But we deny them to be more than instruments. They are not to be raised from the rank of instruments to that of agents. The children of God, or, if you please, men of true virtue, are said to be chosen 'through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.' In this place, sanctification of the Spirit is mentioned in distinction from the word: and, therefore, cannot be supposed to mean the same thing.

If additional proofs were needed to establish the doctrine of a divine influence in the production and maintenance of piety in the human heart, they may be found in the eighth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans. To be led by the Spirit, and to have the Spirit dwelling in us, is there declared essential to our religious security. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. As many, as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God. If the Spirit of God be of him, that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he, that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit, that dwelleth in you. If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if through the Spirit, ye do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Un-



less the necessity of divine influences be here asserted, these strong declarations can have little or no import.

III. I am now to inquire whether there be not some incontestable facts, of which, without supposing a divine influence, no good account can be given.

That this inquiry may come to a fair decision, it will be necessary to consider, with what extreme difficulty men are persuaded to abandon any vice, to which they are addicted. Go to the man, who has been long in the use of impure, or profane language. Ask him, whether he believes in God and the sacred scriptures. On these subjects he disavows all doubt. Ask him, whether it be a matter of indifference with the Almighty, that his name is blasphemed, and his oracles desecrated. This he will not affirm. Ask him if the pleasures of profaneness be so exquisite, solid, and permanent, as to justify that daring hazard, which he incurs, of losing his soul. Probably he is confounded. His countenance betrays conviction, as well of folly, as of guilt. But is he reclaimed? Far from this, he scarcely resolves on an amendment. If he does, the resolution will not survive the next interview with some thoughtless companion.

Go next to the man, accustomed to inebriation. Remind him of the loss of estate and character. Tell him of universal debility, trembling limbs, a body, at once inflamed and emaciated. Tell him of the mortification of his family, and the pity or scorn of his neighbors. Remind him moreover, that nothing but repentance can prevent the eternal perdition of his soul, it having been divinely declared, that no intemperate person shall inherit the kingdom of God. Probably he will hear all this without any resentment; perhaps with great emotion and a profusion of tears. He really laments the power of appetite, to which he sees himself gradually becoming a devoted slave. He is neither ignorant nor wholly unmindful of what the end will be. He has witnessed the interment of others, whose bodies had, by intemperance been prepared for the grave. Yet, like the fasci-

sted bird, he moves, with his eyes open, nigher and nigher to the monster, whose jaws will instantly devour him.

In preserving or recovering youth from open crimes, the same difficulty is often experienced. A father perceives in a favorite son a relish for dissipation. This he at first endeavors to counteract without betraying his fears; but resorts to other means, as the danger becomes more evident. With inexpressible tenderness and anxiety, he cautions, and reasons, and remonstrates. At times he flatters himself, that his efforts are not ineffectual. He perceives in his son, something of regret and relenting. But it is all transient. It is produced in a moment; and in a moment dies. He is alarmed with new evidence of profligate habits. The young votary of pleasure eludes every restraint; and glories in rendering abortive all the efforts of parental love. He will be profligate: he must be undone. In all these instances, you will observe, nothing but external reformation is the immediate object. Yet this is very seldom effected; and never without extreme difficulty. How then shall we account for those instances, in which not merely the abatement of some vices; but a radical and universal change of character is produced; and this too, when no uncommon means are employed?

Figure to yourselves a person of unquestionable understanding and sound judgment, of mature age, and of no uncommon liveliness of imagination, surrounded with respectable connexions, relishing in a high degree the pursuits and amusements of fashionable life:—suppose him to possess from nature a more than ordinary share of haughtiness; to have received, in youth, little instruction of a religious kind; and to have been highly disgusted with subjects of that nature. —This person, let it be imagined, without any thing to render him dissatisfied with the world, and without any effort on the part of others, discovers at once, that all is not right, —flies from one object to another,—but finds, that former pursuits he knows not why, no longer yield their accustom-

ed pleasure. On repairing to the scriptures, he finds his own character portrayed in the following language, "love of pleasure, more than lover of God: having no hope, and without God in the world."

The sacred oracles become more intelligible, for this obvious reason, that they are more interesting, and occupy unusual attention. This person, let it be supposed, becomes strongly attached to the bible,—rapidly acquires a knowledge of its doctrines, and takes pleasure in those devout exercises, which it enjoins. His supercilious courage is exchanged for meekness, condescension, and active benevolence. All domestic and social duties are attended to with unusual punctuality. Though far less gaiety than formerly, there is more cheerfulness;—a cheerfulness, supported by ground, which can never be shaken; I mean the perfect character and government of the most High.

The instance mentioned is not fiction, but undeniable history: nor is it essentially different from a thousand others.

That the change described is great and excellent,—that the person, subsequently to it, makes a far better use than previously, of his intellects;—that as a rational, immortal being, he acts much more in character, cannot be denied without asserting that vice is better than virtue, selfishness better than benevolence, and the veriest trifles better worth our attention, than immortal life:—it cannot be denied, without contradicting the best notions of virtue, prevailing in the world. For, if there be any such thing, as virtue, in what does it consist, if not in reverence and affection towards God, and good will and probity to men, evinced by uniform attention to social duties?

Now, I ask, what has produced this change, so great and undeniably excellent?—a change, not confined to a particular habit, but extending to the whole character? I ask, this question, while it is distinctly in your view, that parents, however judicious or affectionate, so commonly labor in vain, when they attempt to reclaim a child from articular vices?

Persons, who are determined, that no evidence, however glaring, shall produce conviction in favor of the doctrine contemplated, may observe,

I. That, in the case described, and in all those, which are similar, no real change of heart is produced.—I ask, if there be any other criterion, by which to judge of a man's heart, but his deportment? If there be not, the assertion now made by way of objection, falls at once. For, that there is a material alteration in behavior, is beyond dispute.

II. It may be said, that we should not judge hastily; and that present appearances, however flattering, may soon vanish. The remark here made is perfectly just. We ought by no means to be highly confident from present appearances. But, though the remark be true, it has no force, as an objection to the doctrine; because in numberless instances exhibited in every age, this professed conversion has been followed by a life of engaging and uniform virtue.

III. It may be said, that many persons, professing to have become regenerate, have afterwards returned to vice with new avidity.—Now if our doctrine were, that all, who profess to be renewed by the Holy Spirit, are in fact renewed, this objection would be unanswerable. But we assert only this, that many persons of sound judgment and good information, profess to have experienced a change of heart, whose subsequent lives well correspond with such a profession; and continue to the end, materially different from what they were previously to the time, at which this alteration is supposed to have been effected.

But there are others, you tell me, who after making these high professions, though they may not become openly vicious, render it sufficiently manifest, that they have no more virtue, than their neighbors. This is perfectly true. But do you conclude, that there is no such thing as truth and probity on earth, because some men of suspicious morals pretend to them? Do you conclude, that there was no sincere friend of Jesus Christ among his twelve companions,

because Judas was a traitor? Do you confidently infer, that there was never a piece of standard gold, because there have been many counterfeits? If not, can we be justified in denying the regeneration of those, (and the number is not small,) whose subsequent lives have done honor to religion and to the human race, because many others, professing to have had the same feelings, have supported a very indifferent character, or relapsed into open vice?

IV. There is another objection, which we must not leave unnoticed. It is this. The alteration contended for, is sometimes accompanied with great agitation of the passions. It is preceded by distressing anxiety, and followed by proportionate elevation. This, it may be said, is quite an irrational thing, and therefore, must not be attributed to divine influence.

I answer, 1. That the strong emotions, now mentioned, are by no means, the universal accompaniments of regeneration. Some, it is believed, are renewed, at so early a period, that recollection does not extend to it. In most instances, perhaps, the precise period, at which a new disposition, was formed, is not capable of being ascertained. As that high degree of anxiety, specified in the objection, is far from being universal; so the joy, approaching to transport, is very uncommon.

Allowing the objection, therefore, all the force, to which it can possibly pretend, it will prove only against these instances: but nothing against the doctrine in general. But I will endeavor to show, that even in regard to these instances, the objection proves nothing.

Hope and fear are passions, common to our natures. The object of the former is some good, not certainly beyond our reach: the object of the latter, some evil, from which we are not secure. In any given instance, either of these passions will be excited to a degree, corresponding with the greatness of its object, its proximity, and the distinctness, with which it is seen. We do not greatly fear a small evil, nor

one at a vast distance, nor one, which is viewed transiently. As these passions are common to our natures, we never think unfavorably of a man, on account of them, so long as they are not indulged to a degree, disproportionate to their objects. A very high degree of fear would not be thought unreasonable in a mother, whose infant was lying near the verge of a crumbling precipice. If some person were at that moment approaching the infant, very high hopes might for the same reason be justified. When this infant was actually snatched from the danger, what adamant philosophy is that, which condemns her unutterable joy?

Now there are eternal rewards for the righteous, and eternal punishments for the wicked. So he hath declared, who will himself judge the world. It will not be asserted, that all are righteous. The contrary is too evident to admit a moment's doubt. Suppose then, that a person, either by the word or Spirit of God, or in any way whatever, is convinced, not superficially, but effectually and feelingly convinced, that he is himself in the class of the wicked, and exposed to eternal destruction; has this person, or has he not cause to be afraid? If great fears can, in any case, be justified, on what principle can it be asserted, that in the case supposed, they are unreasonable? If, after a time, this person should be relieved from this anxiety, by perceiving in himself moral qualities, which distinguish the righteous; i. e. such persons, as will receive eternal life, would his cause of joy be less, than that of a mother, whose infant was snatched from the crumbling precipice?—What now I demand is left, to justify, or even to render tolerable, that ridicule, with which appearances of this kind are often treated?

But even if these distressing fears, and transporting joys, which, let it be still remembered, do not universally, nor even commonly attend regeneration; If, I say, these very strong terrors and joys were unreasonable, God is not answerable for them any further, than he is the author of our natures; conformably to which nature, a sight of danger

rouses fear ; and a perception of security, or advantage acquired, excites joy :—and as he gives to the wicked man a clear sense of what is indeed his character and his danger: and to the righteous man a perception of this fact, that he has indeed become the servant of righteousness. Though a man, on the recovery of a son from sickness, should exhibit a joy, which was unbecoming, it would not be the less certain, that the recovery itself was the result of divine power.

## LECTURE XVIII.

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### *Regeneration.*

So much having already been said as to the necessity of regeneration, and of divine agency in producing it, we may, with good reason, feel anxious to ascertain the nature of the change, which it implies. That this change relates to the heart, and not to the intellects, was shown in a former lecture. It remains, that we briefly inquire, what is the character of the heart, after this change has been produced.

I. Though it is undeniable that virtue or holiness is our highest interest; and that lasting happiness can be obtained in no way, but that of virtue; it is not true that virtue consists in prosecuting our own interest, as such. If there be in this any appearance of paradox, it will vanish, I think, when we take into view the following consideration; integrity and courtesy of behavior are connected with permanent esteem. But let it once be ascertained, that such integrity and courtesy are supported by no better principle than a regard to public esteem, and even that object is not obtained. In like manner, though virtue and holiness is our highest interest, that is not virtue, the highest principle of which is a regard to ourselves. That we are allowed to regard ourselves I do not deny: that self love (which I conceive to



be merely a love of happiness,) is criminal, I do not affirm. On the contrary, I suppose it common to every intelligent and to every sensitive being in the universe. All, which I assert, is, that self love, acting in any way whatever, does not constitute virtue, or that moral state which is consequent to regeneration.

That virtue cannot be predicated of him, who acts merely with regard to his happiness or interest in the present life, will hardly be disputed. But if I am not truly virtuous, merely because I abstain from a course of behavior externally criminal, through fear of punishment tomorrow, next year, or twenty years hence; can I be virtuous because my anticipation embraces a larger space of time, and I abstain from such behavior through fear of punishment a hundred years hence, i. e. long after the soul shall be separated from the body?

Nor will the case be materially altered, if, instead of fear of punishment, I am actuated by hope of enjoyment. If a regard to one's own advantage in this life be not sufficient to constitute an action virtuous; neither would a similar regard to future advantage or happiness be sufficient for this purpose. If you are not ready to accede to this: but are of opinion, that the pursuit of our own advantage, to be enjoyed after death, is essentially different from the pursuit of present advantage, it will be important to consider, in what the difference consists. It must consist either in the greater forethought, implied in one case, than in the other; or else, in a superiority of taste.

As to the first; the moral quality of an action depends on the motive: but does not depend on the time, at which, that object, which constitutes the motive, is to be obtained. A man, let it be supposed, has two designs in his view; the success of one ensures advantage to himself at the close of one year; the success of the other ensures greater advantage at the close of ten years. To concert and prose-

cute the latter design may evince a different quality of intellect, from what is shown by concerting and prosecuting the former. It may discover more penetration and forethought. But as indications of moral qualities, they are precisely on a level. Though both are consistent with virtue, neither implies it. That forethought does not constitute an action virtuous, will be further evident from this consideration, that much of it is sometimes employed by the worst men in forming their worst designs. The purposes of ambitious men are never confined to the present year, they relate to the whole space of mortal life; and even to events beyond it. When Cæsar died, he had formed designs, which could scarcely be executed in the ordinary age of man. So had Charles XII. of Sweden. (Big. 3, v. 437.) The present emperor of France has been solicitous not for his own security and aggrandizement only, but for the splendor of his family after his decease.

But secondly, though it should be allowed, that the character of an action, the principal motive to which is one's own advantage, is not materially changed by the proximity or distance of that contemplated advantage, there may be supposed to exist an important difference between an action, to which we are influenced by the hope of temporal enjoyments, and by the hope of enjoyments beyond the grave, because these last are of a highly superior nature.

I acknowledge at once, that any person susceptible of happiness from those objects, which yield the bliss of heaven, possesses real virtue. That taste, which is implied in such susceptibility, is peculiar to the virtuous, or the renewed. But wherever that taste exists, there is a love to virtue as such, and independently of its rewards. The strongest incentive to upright actions, in the case supposed, is not personal advantage, but inherent affection to moral rectitude. It does, by no means, follow however, that all persons who are influenced by the hopes of future enjoyment,

that the difference between a renewed, and an unrenewed person, will generally, if not universally, be exceedingly small. There must be some where a dividing line. According to the supposition, we are investigating, there must be a certain number of degrees of good disposition, which the unrenewed person may possess, more than which he cannot possess, and yet retain his unrenewed character. The smallest increase of this number must change his standing, and place him among the regenerate. Designate if you please, the greatest quantum of good disposition, possible to a man remaining unregenerate, by the number of five hundred. The moment, at which he comes into possession of one additional degree, he becomes of course a renewed man, entitled to all the privileges of such a character. Yet the change produced is extremely small. But the language, applied to regeneration by the sacred writers, is not suited to express a change, so inconsiderable. Were no greater alteration than this designed, would men be said to be born anew,—to be born from above,—to pass from death unto life,—to have old things done away, and all things become new,—to be raised from the dead,—from being the enemies of God, would they be said to become his friends; and would the power, by which such a change is effected, be compared to that which was wrought in Christ, when he was raised from the dead?

II. The scriptures seem very clearly to represent the difference between the saint and the sinner, as consisting in a new disposition, and not in higher degrees of disposition, previously existing. "Every one, that loveth is born of God." St. John does not say, that he, who loveth to such a degree, is born of God: nor is it easy to perceive the truth of his declaration, if many, who are not born of God, possess the quality here mentioned.

Our Lord said, concerning the Jews, "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." It was the quality itself, you perceive, and not merely a high degree of it, of

which they were destitute. Had they possessed this love, however deficient in degree, I see not how the declaration could be defended. At least, it will be allowed, that the language is precisely what it would be, were our doctrine true : and such as it probably would not be, were the doctrine false. The same infallible teacher, on another occasion, used an expression, still more forcible ; “ Ye have seen, and hated both me and my father.” If Christ did not by these words deny, that those to whom they were spoken, possessed any degree of love for their Creator and their Saviour, it is difficult to perceive how such a denial could be expressed.

But how, you may ask, can we argue from the character of the Jews to that of all unrenewed men ? An assertion might be true in regard to the former ; and yet not universally true, as it respects the latter. I answer, that there is no reason for supposing Jewish sinners to have been essentially different from others. But the matter appears to be placed above all doubt by other expressions of a more general import ; and that which is here said of the Jews, is said to be common to mankind, “ If the world hate you, ye know, that it hated me, before it hated you :—the world hath hated them because they are not of the world.” It is not necessary to our present purpose, to understand by the term hatred, any thing more, than destitution of love ; as our object is to prove merely, that unrenewed men are thus destitute.

III. If the difference between the righteous and the wicked consists only in the degrees of a quality, common to both, this difference is much less, than that which exists, between many, of the latter description. In their characters there is great variety. Some will be beaten with many stripes, our Lord has informed us, and some, with comparatively few. But their punishment will be exactly proportionate to their demerit. It must be true, therefore, that their characters, or their demerits are various. This is undeniably

which we are now concerned. Grant, if you please, that self love may lead them to think too favorably of their present character; what imaginable reason can be assigned, why they should think too unfavorably of what they once were? I do not mention this argument, as alone conclusive; but that it has much weight, I think, can hardly be denied.

The way is now prepared for considering the question whether regeneration is instantaneous.

Though the arguments, which have been used, are, it is believed, fully sufficient to show, that the difference between the renewed and others, does not consist in degrees of that which is common to both, I would ask, whether even on that supposition, there would not be some instant, at which the necessary degree is acquired? Even if regeneration were as gradual, as the apparent course of a star from east to west, the question must receive an affirmative answer: for, however long the star may be in gaining the meridian, its transition is instantaneous: there is no conceivable duration, in which it is not either in one hemisphere or the other. Neither is there any duration in a man's life, in which he has not, either complied, or not complied with the terms of the christian covenant.

But if, as we have endeavored to prove, there is a radical, an essential difference between the saint and sinner, the matter will appear still more obvious. If the good man has a moral quality, which he once had not, there must be some moment, when he began to possess it.

It is believed by many divines of much respectability, that the wickedness of the human heart is invariably progressive, till a change is produced.

That it never is so, I will not assert: but that such is universally the fact, cannot, I apprehend, be easily proved. The argument relied on is this. Impenitence is criminal in proportion to light, enjoyed by the impenitent person. It is an unusual portion of this, which produces in the sinner conviction and anxiety. Therefore, while persons do not

If the righteous differ from the wicked only in their degrees of goodness, it is impossible for any person to ascertain, whether he belongs to one class or the other, unless that degree should be distinctly marked, which is on the dividing line. No such degree is marked; and therefore no person can, if this doctrine be true, have assurance of salvation. It would follow then, that the scriptures require christians to perform impossibilities; i. e. to know themselves,—to make their calling and election sure, without giving them a standard, by which to determine.

V. I see not why, in determining this question, the testimony of persons of integrity and good understanding should not be considered, as of some weight. There are many persons, whose judgment would on common subjects be highly valued, who are confidently and permanently persuaded, that previously to regeneration, they were wholly destitute of that principle, by which they have since been actuated. There have been in various christian countries, and in different ages, persons of acknowledged integrity and good discernment, thus fully persuaded concerning themselves. It is an opinion, in which they have continued with great firmness during the remainder of life. Nor has this persuasion been confined to those, the former part of whose lives was obviously immoral: but has been entertained by many, in whose visible deportment, there was little to reprehend.

Now, that self deception is not only possible, but easy, I readily grant. But it must be allowed, that no person has so good an opportunity of knowing what passes in the mind of a man, as he has himself. He can ascertain more accurately, than any other, what are his own intentions and motives. Let us view this matter a little more distinctly. Some of the persons, of whom I am now speaking, are acknowledged to possess great integrity; and to give as much evidence of piety, as any on earth. But it is not their opinion of their *present* piety, but of their *former want* of it, in

## LECTURE XIX.

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### *Regeneration.*

In the present lecture, an answer will be attempted to the following inquires.

I. Whether any thing more, than increased light is necessary to the production of a moral change in the human heart.

II. Whether that divine influence necessary to produce this change, is always bestowed according to previous character.

III. Whether any means or efforts used by the impenitent, render their conversion more probable.

IV. Whether it be right to direct persons of this description to the use of means with a view to regeneration.

That *copious* answers should be given to these inquires in the compass of a short discourse, will not be expected.

I. Is any thing more, than increased light necessary to the production of a moral change in the human heart?

To defend the negative of this question, has been undertaken, by individuals justly esteemed for talents, close investigation, and exemplary life. To support their belief the following arguments are used; 1. Men will pursue what appears to be conducive to their happiness; if there-

fore they neglect that, which is really so, it is because they need to be shown, in what their greatest happiness, or their highest interest consists. Whenever this is shown, they will pursue it. 2. If men do not love Deity, whose character is perfectly amiable, it must be, that they do not know it to be such. When this ignorance is removed, God will become an object of their love.

That these arguments are inadequate to the purpose, for which they are adduced, even on supposition, that virtue or piety implies nothing but external obedience, it will not be difficult to show. Does the intemperate man correct his habits, as soon as he is convinced, that his own interest requires such correction? So far from this, there is an avowed conflict between his inclination and appetite. He *knows* what his health, and interest, and happiness require. Can it be believed, for a moment, that all profligate men consider vice, as conducive to permanent good, and virtue conducive to evil? Nothing is more common, than to hear them confess the contrary.

But you inquire, Do not men choose the greatest apparent good? I answer, that men do not always choose what in their *settled judgment*, is the greatest good. But if the question be, whether the good, expected from a sinful action, does not, at the moment, when the will consents, appear greater, than the good, arising from abstinence, it is a question of so much difficulty, that I would not, with confidence, make a decision. In any event, the determination of an inquiry, so very abstruse and metaphysical, can have little weight in opposition to numerous and obvious facts. But let it be conceded, if you please, that the affirmative is true, namely, that at the moment, when the will consents to a sinful action, the good, thence resulting, appears greater, than the good, accruing from abstinence; still the action is against light,—it is against the settled judgment: The reason, why the advantage of sinning appears greater, than the advantage of abstinence, is, that the offender perversely



chooses at that moment to look exclusively on the arguments for one side: he keeps his mind steadily fixed on the pleasure or advantage of the crime, but will not consider the advantages or pleasures of a quiet conscience.

It appears then, that a knowledge of our duty does not infallibly engage us to perform it, even so far as external actions are concerned: by consequence, increasing light will not certainly produce even outward reformation: much less will it produce that inward affection for moral rectitude and the divine character, which is implied in true virtue.

Indeed, whoever speaks of loving virtue, or the Deity, because the possession of such affections would be for our personal advantage, will find difficulty, either in explaining his language, or in defending his opinions.

What kind of love for the Deity is that which proceeds from love to personal interest? Or how does it differ from that love, which an ambitious man has for those, who are the instruments of his elevation;—a love, which is commensurate only with their subserviency to that end.

Further, the opinion, that nothing but more light or instruction is necessary to render wicked men pleased with the divine character, implies that they are not wicked. It implies, that they are now pleased with what the character of God really is; and are disgusted only with some false ideas, which they have, by some misfortune, imbibed concerning him. Were you in company with the best man on earth, supposing him to be the worst, your aversion from him, considered in the latter character, would prove in you no want of uprightness,—no indisposition to virtue; it would even afford a presumption of your own correct moral feelings. Neither would he, after knowing your mistake, feel the least resentment; but acknowledge, that, under existing circumstances, your feelings, and your treatment of him were precisely what they should have been.

If any further arguments were necessary, I would resort to the following fact, namely, that nations have been attach-

ed to the service of their deities, not according as the character of the latter has been pure, but the reverse. The Jews, no doubt had more just views of God, than any contemporary nation. Yet was there no prevailing inclination among their neighbors to embrace the Jewish religion; but a strong propensity in the Jews to embrace theirs. The Moabites and Zidonians had no fondness for the worship of Jehovah; but Israel was perpetually enamoured with Chemosh, Astaroth, and Baal-peor.

It is now, we believe, sufficiently evident, that the cause, why men do not love the true God and obey his law, is not the want of light, but of relish for that which is morally good. If so, something more than increased light is wanting to produce a radical change of character.

II. Our next inquiry is, whether that divine influence, necessary to produce this change, is always bestowed according to previous character.

Sin, or moral evil is that alone, which removes men to a distance from their Maker. Besides this, there is nothing in man, which excites the divine displeasure. Of course, if there be, as we have endeavored to show, any difference in the real demerit of unrenewed men, some are less offensive to him, than others. Now, when all other things are equal, it cannot, I think, be doubted, that those, who are less, will receive the grace of conversion in preference to those, who are more offensive. But though I humbly conceive this to be the way of God's proceeding, when other things are equal; there may be ten thousand circumstances, unknown to us, rendering it highly suitable for Deity to depart from it. And there are many facts, by which such a departure is proved.

When it is said, that God distributes his favor, as a sovereign, it is not meant, at least it ought not to be meant, that he acts either from caprice, or without reason. He never has done, and he never will do an unreasonable action; though many of the circumstances, which render particular

dispensations necessary, may far exceed human comprehension.

Paul, before his conversion, breathed out threatnings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord: being exceedingly mad against them, he persecuted them oft unto strange cities, and compelled them to blaspheme Christ. Now though, in all this he was less guilty, than if he had not done it, as he did, ignorantly in unbelief, he speaks in the strongest terms of his demerit, and declares this as one of the causes, why he obtained mercy, that "Jesus Christ might in him, show forth all long suffering, as a pattern to those, who should afterwards believe on his name to eternal life." Some of the Corinthian disciples, he informs us, "who were washed, justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of God," had been "thieves, revilers, and extortioners."

With regard to such persons, we cannot easily imagine, that they received mercy because of their comparative innocence, i. e. the smallness of their crimes.

We have had personal knowledge of individuals, who were to all appearance unusually far from the kingdom of God, afterwards reduced to a willing subjection. We should not be justified, therefore in asserting, that divine influence is always proportionate to previous character.

Should this in the view of any appear unjust, a few moments' consideration will correct the error.

No injustice is done to him, whose rights are not violated. But that no person, who has violated a just law, has a right to exemption from its penalty, is a proposition, than which none can be more evident, either in government, or morals. Nor can such right be created by the bestowment of pardon on another, whose demerits are equal, or even greater. If punishment would have been just before, it is just at present. Whatever favor is bestowed on one, the punishment of another is not rendered greater, nor his crimes less. The relation between his crime and punishment remains the same.

As God is under no obligation to grant pardon to any, so neither is he bound to communicate that celestial influence, which qualifies men to receive pardon. He does indeed bestow both; and exercises his mercy agreeably to his wisdom, i. e. in such manner, as is most conducive to the order and happiness of the intelligent universe.

But because some distinguished offenders have obtained mercy, while some others, apparently less criminal, have passed through life without piety, we can by no means conclude, that such is the usual course of divine proceeding. That it is perfectly immaterial, whether unrenewed men restrain their appetites, or give them full liberty; that the most impious unblushing profligates are no more unlikely, in general, to receive that grace, which shall fit them for eternal life, than those, who, under the influence of conscience maintain a decent sobriety, is a doctrine, which surely looks with very ill aspect on morality, and derives no support from the oracles of God.

III. We are next to inquire, whether any means or efforts, used by the impenitent, render their conversion more probable. That certain religious means have been divinely ordained, for the instruction and conversion of the wicked, admits no doubt. Christ delivered his message, "that men might believe, and that believing, they might have life through his name;" and Paul was sent to the Gentiles "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God."

It never has been, and I suppose never can be doubted, that the great design of God in communicating the gospel to the world, and in the directions, which he gave, that this gospel should be preached to every creature, was the conversion and future salvation of sinners. Now, if means are ordained with reference to a particular end, that end is more likely to be accomplished, when means are used, than when they are not. If God has been pleased to appoint, that the Gospel should be preached for the instruction

and renovation of men; if *faith comes by hearing*, it is absurd to deny, that the general probability of conversion is greater to those, who attend religious services, than to those, who neglect them.

Further, the probability of obtaining converting grace is in some degree, affected by self examination. This is generally believed, that I apprehend, there is scarcely a pious man on earth, who would not rejoice at observing an irreligious child or neighbor, comparing his own character, with the christian standard.

That the performance or neglect of this exercise is not immaterial, even while men are unregenerate, will appear by the following command of St. Paul, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in faith." From the very nature of this exhortation it could not have been given on supposition of the piety of those to whom it was directed. Uncertainty on this point, rendered investigation necessary. Whatever were the result of this inquiry, i. e. whether it led those, who made it, to perceive that they were, or that they were not in the faith, its *immediate* object was answered. The discovery, however unwelcome to those, who were unbelievers, rendered this state, at least, in some degree more hopeful, than it was previously.

Again, it is not a matter wholly indifferent, whether men live in the maintenance or neglect of prayer. The Lord said by Ezekiel, "For this will I be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." The blessing to be conferred, was "a new heart and a new spirit." The bestowment of this, the prophet attributes to divine mercy, and declares it to be a thing, which God should do for them. Yet he would be previously sought to. They were required to ask of God, that he would "take from them the heart of stone, and give them a heart of flesh."

But even if the requirement had not been made in so many words, would not, even in that case, the propriety and expedience of the thing have been obvious? Granting

these two propositions, 1st, that sinners need a new heart; and, 2d, that the bestowment of this is the prerogative of God; will it be denied, that such bestowment should be sought in prayer? If I am in the greatest possible need of a favor, which it is in the power of but one being in the universe to grant; would it not, beyond all question, be a point of prudence to make application to him?

That prayer is to be resorted to by all men, even by the unregenerate, receives countenance, to say the least, from that well known passage in our Saviour's sermon on the mount, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened." In the meaning of these words, we believe, is comprehended, that a sedulous use of the means, and a diligent inquiry about salvation, are the way, in which God and eternal life are usually found. The truth of this is generally allowed, even by those who do not believe that the words, which we have cited, prove it. *President Edwards*, whom no persons suspects of having entertained lax notions of human depravity, uses the following language: "Though God has not bound himself to any thing, which a person does, while destitute of saving faith, and out of Christ, there is yet great probability, that on hearkening to this counsel you will live."

You will object perhaps, that the words of Christ, "ask and ye shall receive," &c, if applied to the unregenerate, are not true. I answer, that in the most rigid sense, they are not true, even in application to the renewed: but in a general sense they are true in application to all. If you say that the faithfulness of God requires him to fulfil all his promises, as soon as the conditions of them are complied with; and therefore, as many unrenewed sinners do not find, it is certain that they do not seek; I answer, that pious believers frequently do not receive the things for which they pray; and yet they do not think that the fidelity of God is to be impeached. Because one sinner, or ten, or a hundred, have been lost, after paying, for a while, some earnest at-

tention to their spiritual concerns, will by no means follow, that earnest and persevering endeavours do not usually issue in the attainment of that grace, which is effectual.

There are various passages of scripture, both promises and declarations of a general, indefinite nature ; and it may be very difficult to ascertain, when those, who claim an interest in them, are entitled to it. Still those passages may be, in a general view, both intelligible and weighty. I will name some of them. A "diligent hand maketh rich." We know that *some*, who are diligent in business, do not become rich. Yet, generally speaking, diligence procures wealth. "If ye be willing and obedient," said God to Israel, "ye shall eat the good of the land : but if ye rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword." It would assuredly be difficult to fix on the precise degree of disobedience, which should bring destruction on the Jews, or to define that degree of obedience, which would keep it off : but the meaning in general is extremely plain.

To mention but one example more : "He that walketh with wise men, shall be wise ; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Should these words be taken without any limitation, they would prove what is contrary to fact, that no person, not pious himself, has associated with those, who are : and that no person, who is not destroyed, has associated with the profligate. They would prove, that when any person becomes the companion of fools, he will perish : whereas *some*, who have been many years thus connected, have afterwards been renewed and saved.

In like manner, the general object of our Saviour's words "Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek and ye shall find," is to encourage men to seek God for the bestowment of necessary blessings, whether pertaining to this life, to the renewing of the heart, or to progressive sanctification.

The time will not permit me to notice several other arguments of no inconsiderable weight. Against the sentiments now defended, the following objection is made :

It has not only been conceded, but proved, that unrenewed men are destitute of holiness, or real virtue; how then, it may be asked, can any of their actions contribute to their advantage? In answer, I allow that none of those actions merit the least favor; nay, that there is a criminal, and therefore punishable defect in the disposition, with which any of them is performed. But God bestows his grace on what terms he pleases, always, however, agreeably to wisdom. When we are inquiring into the *manner* in which these are bestowed, facts are of more importance than a thousand objections. Now, it is fact, that because Ahab, an unrenewed sinner, humbled himself, and walked softly, the evil threatened, was not sent in his day. (1. Kings, xxi. 29.) "Seest thou, said God to Elijah, "How Ahab humbleth himself? Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house."

In the book of Proverbs, we find two remarkable expressions. One is, "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord. (xv. 8.) The other is this, "The plowing of the wicked is sin." (xxi. 4.)

Now, in whatever manner these passages are understood, it will not be doubted, that the common labours of a wicked man have the same moral complexion, as his prayers. If therefore, unrenewed men do receive advantage from their industry, they *may* from their prayers. God may bestow favors in consequence of the one, as well as of the other.

IV. Our next inquiry is, whether it be right to direct unrenewed persons to the use of means with a view to regeneration.

The question is not, you will observe, whether any attention to external duties can be a substitute for regeneration; nor whether there be in scripture any promise of renewing grace, which the unregenerate can claim: but merely whether it be right to direct persons of this description to



consult the sacred writings, to hear them explained, and to offer prayer, that the heart may be transformed.

To establish the negative, has been attempted with less success, than ingenuity. The argument on the affirmative side is extremely plain, and, so far as I can perceive, perfectly conclusive. St. Paul asserts, that "faith comes by hearing." If so, those who hear, are more likely to obtain faith, than those who do not. This we have endeavored to prove: and it is in fact almost universally conceded. Yes; but a thing may be true, you will say, and yet the declaration of it may be inexpedient. Then the only question is, whether it be a truth to be concealed or divulged. I really know not how it can be concealed, since the apostle has made it so public. But surely his authority is as good to prove the *expediency of making it known*, as to prove the truth of the doctrine. And it is perfectly immaterial, whether I advise a person to a particular measure, or only propose to him the strongest arguments in favour of it.

It may be objected,

I. To prescribe the use of means for the obtaining of conversion, seems to imply that impenitence proceeds rather from the want of power, than the want of will: else, why are they not required to exercise immediate repentance?

I reply, that the objection lies with equal force against the christian's using means to promote personal sanctification. For the will is as much, and natural power as little concerned in the sinful actions of a believer, as in those of an unbeliever. You may as well, therefore, ask the christian why he is not perfectly holy, and at this very instant, without the use of means and ordinances!

II. It may be further objected, that if you advise persons to any actions, that they may become renewed, you advise them to remain unrenewed at least during the continuance of that action.

I answer, that this objection, however specious, cannot be much valued even by those by whom it is brought, because

they, no less than others, prescribe to believers the use of ordinances as means of religious advancement, i. e. of subduing those corruptions of heart, yet remaining. But this as much implies advice, that these corruptions of heart should be indulged, till resort is had to ordinances, as the advice to sinners, just mentioned, implies encouragement for their continuance in sin. There is not a particle of difference in the two cases.

III. I shall notice but one more objection. It is this: If persons in religious anxiety are directed to particular acts or performances, as what may probably issue in their conversion, there is danger, that resting satisfied with these, they will perish without the obtainment of that, which they profess to desire.

I answer, that any truth, however clear, and any exhortation, however pertinent, may be abused. If no truth may be declared, until it is certain that a good use will be made of it, all truth must be suppressed.

I acknowledge however, that great caution is to be used in giving the advice, which has been mentioned. The sinner is to be shown, that nothing, short of actual repentance can save him; that he is under present obligations to repent; and that no one can be answerable for the continuance of his life. Acceding to all this, he may still desire to know, whether the obtainment of a penitent disposition is more probable in one course of proceeding than in another: whether any thing, which he can do; any means, which he can use, will make any difference, as to the prospect or his being renewed. If, on being told, that the probability is somewhat greater to those, who use the means of grace, than to those, who neglect them, he becomes well satisfied, resting in the means, while the end is not obtained, his blood will most obviously be upon his own head; and can by no means be required at the hands of those, whom he consulted.

But, on the other hand, it ought well to be considered

whether there be no danger in withholding this advice. For, if inquisitive, anxious persons receive no answer to the inquiry, just mentioned, it is fairly inferred, that the religious instructor, to whom it is proposed, does not believe that the attainment of renewing grace by those, who use means, is more probable than by those, who neglect them; nor that criminality is less in one case, than in the other. And, if a sinner can, himself, be of the same opinion, there is no imaginable reason, why, he should not pursue that course, which is most pleasant to him;—why he should not walk “in the way of his heart, and in the sight of his eyes,” forgetting, as far as possible, “that for all these things, God will bring him into judgment.”

I have now, my young friends, said all, which I designed, by way of stating, and proving the doctrine of regeneration. In these lectures, I have either been very laboriously proving nothing; or else have made evident the truth of a doctrine, which will, both to myself and you, be of the highest concernment through eternal ages. No person, you will readily grant, ought to entertain an opinion, which he is afraid to examine, nor ought he to shrink from those arguments, which are brought against him. If, therefore, you do not believe, that a moral change is necessary to salvation, go directly to the scriptures, and prove, either that they are false, or else, that they inculcate no such doctrine. Be sure, to establish your disbelief so firmly, that it can not be shaken by days of sickness, or the approach of death.—But if you have no disposition to make this daring experiment, Thus saith the wisdom of God; “Turn ye at my reproof: behold I will pour out my spirit unto you and make known my words unto you: for whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from the fear of evil.”

## LECTURE XX.

—1000:—

### *Supplement to Lectures on Regeneration.*

In the nature and tendency of your studies, there is considerable variety. In all of them the exercise of intellectual powers is required. But the study of morality and religion is designed, through the medium of the intellects, to affect the character and the heart. To acquire correct sentiments on these subjects becomes, therefore, a matter of high importance. But it is, in no small degree, dangerous, to study ethics or religion, merely as a science, and regardless of any practical result. If religion is true, it relates to the obligations, and to the eternal condition of human beings. In the theological lectures, which have been delivered this term, it has been my object clearly to exhibit a doctrine, which was taught by Him, whom the Father commissioned to bear witness to the truth. I now ask your attention, while a brief recapitulation is made of the propositions, contained in those lectures, and while an attempt is made to improve them for practical purposes.

It was shown in the *first* place, that the change implied in regeneration, is of a moral nature. In the *second* place, it was inquired, for whom this change was necessary. It was shown to be necessary for the heathen, and for all those in christian countries, whose moral state is no better than theirs. It was shewn to be necessary for all, who live in the habitual violation of christian precepts, such as thieves, dishonest, lascivious, and covetous persons ;—for drunkards, revilers, and extortioners ;—for liars, and for such as are accustomed to profane language. For those, moreover, it was proved necessary, on whose minds religious considerations make no deep nor habitual impression ;—for such as are incapable of enjoying the kingdom of God ;—and, lastly, for all the intelligent offspring of Adam.

Under the third general head, *probable* evidence was exhibited from *facts* and *direct* evidence from *scripture*, that this moral change is the result of divine operation, and is never produced merely by the increase of religious information.

An inquiry was then instituted, as to the character of the heart subsequently to regeneration, and whether this change consists in the reception of a new moral quality, or only in the augmentation of goodness already existing. The latter we endeavored to disprove, and to establish the former.

It was shewn to be the characteristic of a renewed heart to love virtue, or holiness, for its own sake. This implies supreme affection for the Deity, as that Being, in whom there is perfection of moral rectitude. It implies obedience to the commands, and submission to the dispensations of God, as these are the *result* of such rectitude.

For the same reason, it implies complacency in the virtuous, and benevolence to all sentient beings.

The christian temper, like every other object, must have a beginning. There must be, in regard to every renewed person, a time, before which it did not, and after which it did exist.

Though in the bestowment of renewing grace, God acts with sovereign wisdom, and in the exercise of the highest benevolence, the reasons, by which he is influenced, are frequently concealed from human investigation, and spiritual, like temporal favors, are not always distributed in such manner, as to ignorant mortals might seem most suitable. In general, however, there is most reason to hope for the conversion and salvation of such, as, being restrained by the influence of christian education, maintain regularity of life, and attend, with sobriety, on the institutions of religion.

Having made the recapitulation, we proceed to improve the subject. And,

1. I request you all to reflect on the remarks, which were made as to the persons for whom regeneration is necessary.

It is necessary for the profane;—by which, I mean those who are accustomed to use, with levity, that language, which expresses objects of a sacred nature, such as the Divine Being and his attributes; or the eternal sanctions of his holy law. How many of those present, are embraced in the description, I know not. It is feared, that the proportion is not small.

In all that vast variety of sins, by which mortals excite the wrath of heaven, I know not whether there is one, which more directly than this, expresses contempt towards the Sovereign of the Universe. It is, against the Almighty, a warfare publicly declared. In addressing persons of this class, I have at least one advantage. Should all other sinners question their need of a spiritual renovation, in your case there can be no room for doubt. In the great conflict between virtue and vice, you openly declare on which side your interest is embarked. There is a kind of impious ostentation, with which your hostility to God and his religion is displayed. And you do much towards diffusing around you a spirit of implety. By a common and a profane use

of the most solemn expressions, you teach others to disregard the ideas to which these expressions are applied. You thus allay the terrors of guilt, diminish a sense of moral obligation, and remove those flood-gates, which oppose the torrent of general profligacy. In a very palpable sense, therefore, you act the part of enemies to God, and to the illustrious cause of virtue and righteousness. *Marvel not, therefore, that we say unto you, that ye must be born again.* Being not only alienated from the life of God, but enemies to him by wicked works, a reconciliation, implying a radical change of heart and character, is the only condition, on which you can enjoy any rational hopes of escaping the wrath to come.

II. It has been shown by the direct testimony of an inspired apostle, that every intemperate person is destitute of piety, and has therefore need to be regenerated. Whether the epithet can justly be applied to any among you, I know not. But that there have been those to whom it did apply; those, who, during their academical life, formed those habits, in consequence of which, they are at this moment, lost to virtue and honour, lost to their friends and society, and lost to every well founded hope, either as to the present or future life, is a fact which I blush to acknowledge, but which can neither be denied nor concealed. When it is considered, as merely *possible*, that some individuals among you, may now be insensibly advancing to the same deplorable state, you will not be surprised, at my recalling your attention to intemperance and dissipation, as a mark of irreligion; as indicating the necessity of a moral change.

III. Those, on whom religion makes no deep impression, were said to need a spiritual renovation. That this character belongs to the most of those, whom I address, will probably be admitted without hesitation. If there are many, who can repel the charge, from such we readily withdraw it. It would afford a degree of joy not easily expressed, were we ascertained, that many among you possess

minds highly sensible to religious truth—tremblingly alive to the denunciations and promises of the Gospel. But if it were so, would not the exercises of the sabbath excite a greater interest? Would discourses on the great doctrines of christianity, or concerning death and the retributions of eternity, operate like those unmeaning sounds, whose only influence is to paralyse thought and produce sleep?

IV. It was shown that regeneration is necessary for those who are incapable of enjoying the kingdom of God. This proposition is so perfectly obvious, that there can be neither doubt nor error concerning it, excepting as to its application.

As Heaven, or the Kingdom of God, is a state of happiness, and you have a capacity for happiness, you may feel confident that you are capable of enjoying this state. But would the presence of God, and the constant devotions of heaven render you happy? It has been observed by a writer, in whose praise one is scarcely in danger of being extravagant, "That every species of creatures is designed for a particular way of life; to which the nature, the capacities, temper, and qualifications of each species, are as necessary, as their external circumstances." For want of such temper and qualifications, those circumstances, and that condition, which afford to one person the highest enjoyment, may, to another, be indifferent, or even disgusting. As to your susceptibility of celestial happiness, a correct opinion may be formed from the enjoyment, which you receive from intercourse with such as are fairest candidates for it; from those duties, which most resemble the employments of saints in light. If the character, law, and providence of God;—if the nature, incarnation, and offices of our Saviour;—if that state of perfect moral purity, and unutterable glory, which the superabounding grace of God has prepared for his people, are the most pleasant subjects of contemplation;—and if the worship of God is that employment, which you more esteem than



any other, you are not to be considered, as incapable of enjoying the Christian Paradise. But, permit me to ask, whether this is a claim, the establishment of which will be generally attempted? Is it not certain; and, from the view which has been taken of the subject, does it not appear, that you are not susceptible of the joys of the new Jerusalem; or in the words of St. Paul, *not meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light?*

This class will comprehend not only all, who were mentioned under the preceding descriptions, such as the profane, dissolute, &c. but some whose morals are scarcely reproachable.

Many who are present, it is believed, are now convinced, that when we are speaking to the unregenerate, we are speaking to them; and that to them are directed all the threatnings and exhortations, which in the word of God, are addressed to unpardoned sinners. Such as the following, "Say ye to the wicked, It shall go ill with him, for the rewards of his hands shall be given him. God is angry with the wicked. If ye turn not he will whet his sword: He hath bent his bow and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death. Except ye repent, ye shall all perish." Whatever may be your intellectual powers or acquirements, whatever of ease and accommodation there may be in your circumstances, however inviting may be those worldly prospects, which are opening upon you, there is this appalling consideration, that without piety of heart, God is not your portion. The bounties of his providence, in which you are permitted to share, evince his benevolence toward you, but not his approbation. Whether you are engaged in your common pursuits or at leisure;—whether in company or in solitude;—whether you retire to rest, or rise from the bed of slumber, you are in the hands of a Being, to whom you are not reconciled, and from whose bounty the impenitent have nothing to hope beyond the present life.

No task can, indeed, be more ungrateful, than that of making a representation, so gloomy and so alarming. But, if the representation is founded in scripture, the truth it contains, ought not to be concealed. And, that it is thus founded, has, it is presumed, been sufficiently shown.

Again, it was shown in preceding lectures, that regeneration is not effected, merely by the communication of additional light. The reason why the sinner does not love the moral character and moral law of God, is not, that he is ignorant of either. The more accurately moral subjects are understood, the more striking will be the contrast between virtue and vice. The more clearly the divine purity is displayed to the sinner's mind, the more obvious will be the moral difference between God and himself; by consequence, he sees more of a character opposite to his own.

Neither does the sinner reject the terms of salvation, for any cause, corresponding with what is usually called physical impossibility. It is merely a disinclination to moral rectitude. It is the want of that disposition, and those feelings, which reason and scripture unite to approve. The difficulty with the sinner is not, that he is ignorant of the character of God, but that he has no complacency in it.

Facts in melancholy abundance corroborate this sentiment. Wicked men, in the immediate view of death, are not renewed by the prospect before them. Many in this condition fully believe, that the salvation of the soul depends on their immediate repentance; and that, without this, the pains of eternal reprobation will, in a few days, or a few hours, be experienced. They not only acknowledge this; but the prospect throws them into the greatest terror. This terror, however, does not effect any radical change of character. It does not inspire them with love to that, which was previously odious to them, nor render offensive that, which they formerly loved.

Further, it was shown, that there is an essential difference between the saint and the sinner, and that the character of

the former does not consist in his possessing, in greater degrees, that, which is common to both. The one has nothing of that quality, which, in the other, will receive a divine reward. The words of Christ to the Jews, "I know you that ye have not the love of God in you," are applicable to every unrenewed person. In this consists his criminality, and hence will arise his punishment. This want of love to God disqualifies him for the divine presence, and for a participation in the bliss and employments of heaven. Hostile to the Supreme Being, and excluded from heaven, his misery arises from his own depravity, and from the impiety and malevolence of other beings, who resemble himself. This being true, the unrenewed person ought never to consider his condition secure. Retaining his present character, he refuses to repent,—he refuses to love and serve his Maker,—he rejects that gracious covenant, which has been established in the blood of Christ. And though he may, at one time, be more restrained, and sin with less boldness of determination, than at another, the great account to be exhibited against him, is perpetually enlarging; because every sin forms a new article, and he refuses the terms on which the whole may be cancelled. It follows, therefore, that were light poured into the mind in streams ever so pure and copious, no radical change of character would be hereby ensured.

I am painfully sensible of the difficulty of presenting this subject, in such manner, as to make any impression on the minds of the young. You feel, as if health were firm, death far distant, and religion unseasonable. Your natural aversion from serious contemplation, gives additional deception to these appearances. You consider it perhaps, as one of the privileges of youth to treat religion, with indifference, if not with levity. In this you feel supported by prevailing custom. In the majority of those around you, nothing is perceived to reprove your impiety, but something to give it additional boldness, and to swell it to a fearless daring. So,

in every age, the gay and thoughtless have afforded to each other encouragement, and communicated a vicious contagion. One generation of thoughtless sinners is swept off to that state, from which they are not permitted to return and give warning to survivors. The latter follow their predecessors both in character and destiny. In this connexion, one cannot avoid being struck with the following thought recently presented in a popular work. Speaking of a celebrated actor, delivering, before a crowded theatre, the soliloquy of Hamlet on death, and on the dreadful uncertainty of those scenes, which follow, "He was one man," says the author, "among two thousand silent spectators, interrogating thought concerning the destiny of mortals." It is added, "In a few years, all that was there, will exist no longer; but others will assist in their turn, at the same uncertainties, and will plunge in like manner into the abyss, without knowing its depth."

That youth affords any security against the invasion of death, is an opinion, which no person can deliberately entertain. At some times, and under certain circumstances, such a thought would be peculiarly absurd. The providence of God, in regard to this seminary, has been so ordered, as to prevent, one would think, the possibility of an imagination so groundless. Could you have attended the dying beds of those, who either as members, or graduates of this College, have closed their probationary state, would it have appeared to you, either that youth is invulnerable, or that it cancels the obligations of religion? You once knew them;—you once conversed familiarly with them;—you have seen some of them gradually wasted by disease; but you will see them no more. In what light did they view that alienation from God, which you seem to claim, as a rich immunity? Is life more at your command, than it was at theirs? And do you know, that, within a single year, your own death will not be held up as a warning to others?

And, now, to use the words of one, who himself knew

hence follow, that there will be any happiness ; as all claims to this are forfeited by sin. But were the future existence of happiness ascertained, the terms, on which it might be secured, would still be unknown. While all these questions remain unanswered without supernatural instruction, it can hardly be imagined, that the light of nature will enable us to ascertain, either the degree, or duration of future punishment. Nothing, therefore, can be more absurd, than to discard the scriptures, with a view to support the doctrine of universal salvation. If that doctrine be not found in the bible, it is found no where. Many inquiries of extreme importance and difficulty must be settled by the unbeliever in revelation, before he comes to the question of eternal, and universal happiness.

I would further observe, that the subject in hand is far too important and solemn to be treated with declamation, instead of argument. If the doctrine of endless punishment be evidently false, as those, who declaim against it, would have us believe, to prove its falsity by argument can surely require no great labor. When this is done, declamation will be more in season.

An additional remark is this, should the doctrine of eternal punishment appear supported by scripture, it will, by no means, be a sufficient reason for rejecting it, that the idea, which it suggests, is gloomy ; or that we may not be able to see the good purposes, which it will accomplish under the divine government. I readily grant, that the thought of endless existence in misery is terrific and overwhelming. But it must be remembered, that many events in the present state, the existence of which cannot be denied, are extremely different from the ideas, which human creatures would have previously formed. To our limited intellects it would appear, that from a system, produced by an infinitely powerful, and benevolent God, all natural and moral evil ought to have been excluded. Yet the lives of some individuals appear to be an unbroken series of disappoint-

ment, disaster, and suffering. Cities are sometimes desolated by pestilence, ingulfed by an earthquake, or overwhelmed by inundation. Wars have, within a few years, laid waste the fairest countries of Europe. Collect in your imagination all the evil, which has resulted to the human race, in the different ages and nations of the world, from poverty, sickness, wounds, fear, anger, despair, malice, and revenge; from more general calamities, such as tyranny, anarchy, famines, contagious diseases, and national feuds; you perceive at once what an immense mass of wretchedness might thus be formed. No person, I think, will hesitate to grant, that authentic history presents to the mind, a vast variety of gloomy ideas; and that the actual state of the world is, and ever has been extremely different from what might have been anticipated, considering the character of its author. But notwithstanding this, no theist imagines, that there is, in truth, any inconsistency between the present seemingly disjointed state of things, and the natural and moral perfections of God. No one doubts, that in some way or other, the permission of moral, and the positive infliction of natural evil, is reconcileable with perfect wisdom, benevolence, and power; and, by consequence, that the only reason, why these things appear to us inconsistent with supreme benevolence and wisdom, is our ignorance of the divine system of government, and our inability to see the connexion between its various parts.

Few, it is believed, deny the endless duration of future punishment from finding any deficiency of scripture evidence on the subject. Allowing, that there is, independently of revelation, no improbability in the doctrine, few persons, I should imagine none, would deny, that the scriptures teach it. But if there is previously a rational, and strong presumption against it, it must also, doubtless, be presumed, that those passages, which have been thought to establish the doctrine, have been incorrectly explained.

On this supposition, two things would demand considera-

tion; I. The clearness, and force of those passages. As the scriptures were given by inspiration of God, they must be true in the sense, in which they were spoken. And, if the sense, in which they have been understood, be so clear, as to admit no reasonable doubt, the previous presumption vanishes before it. This world is in a state, it has been observed, in various respects, different from what might have been anticipated. Previously to its creation, there would have been, to creatures of our limited powers, a very strong presumption against the existence of natural and moral evil, especially in that enormous degree, in which we find them actually existing. But since disorder and sufferings do exist in the world, all previous presumption, however strong, goes for nothing. Now, let it be supposed, that at a time before creation began, Deity gave to some beings, whose capacities were not greater than ours, a revelation, containing some account of the world, soon to be made. In this revelation, would of course, be foretold, the vices and the sufferings of men. If the language, describing these evils, were explicit and forcible, and could have no other meaning, consistently with the general tenor of the revelation, and the meaning of terms, as there used, such declarations ought, by all means, to prevail against a previous presumption.

II. When we speak of presumptions either for or against an opinion, it is important to inquire, whether we have so much knowledge of the subject, as to be judges, on which side probability lies. To a child it might appear extremely improbable, that a humane magistrate would sentence any one to prison, to the post, or the gallows. Yet a better knowledge of the subject would lead him to perceive, that such punishment might be not only consistent with benevolence, but the result of it. And it will readily occur to every considerate person, that the inability of a child to judge of the measures of a civil magistrate is incomparably less, than the inability of men to judge of the proceedings of God.

With a view to disprove the doctrine of eternal punishment, it is common to make appeals to parental feelings. As these would be extremely injured by the idea of perpetual punishment inflicted on a child, it is argued, that such punishment must be adverse to the nature of that Being, whose benevolence is far superior to that of men.

Whether this kind of reasoning can be relied on, will appear by applying it to certain facts. It is, for instance, inconsistent with parental tenderness, to imprison a child for life, or sentence him to be executed. Yet the doing of neither of these, under particular circumstances, argues any want of correct feelings in a magistrate. All men would unite in allowing, that no man could be fit for a magistrate, who should refuse to punish the assassin or highway robber. A prince should doubtless be the father of his people; but, to support this character, would it be necessary to suffer murderers to live, and the guilty in general to go unpunished? You clearly perceive, that this apparent humanity to the guilty, would issue in extensive danger and harm to the innocent.

Let us apply the reasoning to other cases, which happen more directly under the divine government? Reasoning in this way, Noah would not have expected the deluge, nor prepared for his own safety. He would have said, 'God has indeed declared his purpose of destroying all flesh from off the earth; but as such severity would be most abhorrent from parental feelings, it is not to be imagined, that any such purpose can be entertained by him, who is parent of the Universe. Therefore, the divine declaration, though apparently obvious, must be explained away, or considered only as a menace, designed to produce salutary alarm.'

Now, this was probably the reasoning of the antediluvians, who were destroyed: but surely it was not the reasoning of Noah, who was saved.

In like manner, when the angels announced to Lot, that



approaching ruin of Sodom, he might have persuaded himself, that no such event would happen. God is the parent of men. These inhabitants of Sodom are part of his family. He is better and more full of compassion, than earthly parents. But who, among the latter, could endure, that his children should be destroyed by fire, enraged with brimstone? Therefore, though these celestial messengers have threatened ruin to the city, they must have had some meaning altogether different from that which their language seems calculated to convey.

In all attempts to disprove the doctrine of endless punishment, no argument perhaps is so much relied on, as that which is founded on the divine benevolence. This attribute the scriptures extol in the strongest language.

Now, it is readily granted, that the doctrine in question, if really inconsistent with the goodness of God, cannot be defended. But though it is perfectly safe to make this concession, you must carefully consider how inadequate we are to determine what measures the highest benevolence will dictate. This benevolence is undeniably consistent with all the sufferings, which are actually endured by men. It is consistent with that vast aggregate of evils already noticed, as having been endured, in various periods of the world, by individuals and nations; though it is far beyond our power to discern how these are made to accomplish benevolent designs. Of this we are sure, that the benevolence of God will never inflict a punishment, which justly condemns;—i. e. a punishment, which is disproportionate to the offender's demerit. But such is our ignorance of the scheme of God's moral government, and the connexion, subsisting between its various parts, that we cannot determine, in regard to any given instance, that the execution of justice will be inconsistent with benevolence. In civil governments, there are many cases, in which benevolence requires, that the law should be rigidly executed. Whenever the infliction of just punishment on individuals, tends to promote

good order, and the happiness of society at large, to dispense with such punishment argues, not the exuberance of good will, but the want of it. In like manner, if it be just to punish the sinner without end, such punishment may contribute to the order and well being of God's moral kingdom. If it does, that benevolence, which regards the whole more than parts, and that which is greater, more than what is less, requires, that such punishment be inflicted. (Dr. Priestly.)

It becomes highly important, therefore, to ascertain whether endless punishment be consistent with justice; in other words, whether it be proportionate to the sinner's character. This, you perceive, is perfectly distinct from the main question; and may be answered in the affirmative, without proving the actual perpetuity of future punishment.

Towards rational creatures God sustains the character of law-giver. From the fact, that God maintains a moral government over intelligent beings, it follows, that there are some things, which he approves and will reward; others, which he disapproves and will punish. That God is a legislator, and that he will reward the observance of his law, and punish violations of it, is more clearly taught in revealed, than in natural religion. The punishment threatened to disobedience, is in the dialect of scripture, termed the *curse of the law*.

In Deuteronomy xxvii. 26. it is said, "Cursed is he who confirmeth not the words of this law to do them." To which passage the apostle evidently refers, in his epistle to the Galatians, "As many, as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." To ascertain the duration of the evils, comprehended under this curse, may be of use towards determining whether endless punishment be consistent with divine justice. For, that the law of God is just, will not

be denied. Of course the penalties, which it threatens, cannot be unjust. These penalties must consist either in limited, or unlimited evils; i. e. sufferings, which are either temporary or endless. It is likewise certain, that the wicked will, after death, endure a punishment, to which the scriptures apply the term *everlasting*. "They shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

This language however powerful, is supposed by those, who deny the perpetuity of future punishment, to mean nothing more, than a limited duration. If so, it may be equal to the evils, which are threatened in the law, or it may be greater or less. If the future punishment of reprobates is just equal to that which is threatened in the law, it is in fact precisely the same. And if the impenitent will endure the curse of the law, it is evident that they will not be saved. They will be treated with as much severity, as if no Saviour had been appointed. For, in that case, more, than was threatened in the law could not have been required.

Suppose then, that the punishment, threatened by law, was limited; yet of greater duration, than that which reprobates will in fact experience. But that which reprobates will experience, is declared to be *eternal*;—to continue *forever and ever*. Now, whatever these terms may signify, it is evident, that none, more powerful, are used to express the curse, denounced by the law: and, therefore, no person can assert, that the law threatens a greater punishment, than that which reprobates will endure, unless he can show, that such punishment is more than *eternal*, and will continue longer than *forever and ever*. It will hardly be said, I suppose, that the punishment, threatened by the divine law, is less, than that which the impenitent will endure. For, in that case, the Gospel is a dispensation of more severity, than the law: and, if, as will be readily granted, the law threatens all the punishment, which is just, the gospel threatens that which is unjust. It appears then, that the curse of the divine law, is neither a temporary punishment greater nor less than the punishment which reprobates

will endure: nor yet, admitting the latter to be limited, are the two commensurate; it follows then that the punishment, threatened by the law, is not temporary: by consequence, it is eternal. Now, if eternal punishment be threatened by the divine law, the justice of such punishment cannot be denied. Nothing can be more evidently dishonorable to God, than a supposition, that he should threaten a punishment, which it would be unjust to inflict. In all human governments, this is so far from contributing to the support of authority, that it excites either contempt or rebellion.

If, in this argument, which has been suggested by a late American divine, there be any thing liable to objection, it must be in that proposition, which asserts, that the curse of the law cannot be the same which is actually inflicted on the impenitent, on supposition the latter is temporary. Some persons, it is probable, believe, that the limited punishment, which reprobates will suffer hereafter is precisely what the law threatens; and that the culprit, after enduring such punishment, will experience no salvation, but sink into primitive non-existence.

It is readily acknowledged, that this opinion is not affected by the preceding reasoning, which holds good in regard to those only, who believe in universal salvation. Whatever others do, they cannot deny the justice of endless punishment: but must acknowledge, conformably to their own sentiments, that such punishment is consistent with justice.

There is another ground, on which the justice of future unlimited punishment may be defended. It is this. As long, as a person sins, he deserves punishment. If he sin, during his whole life, he will be exposed to sufferings during life. If he sin for a thousand years after his death, he will suffer during that time. If he sin eternally, his punishment must have no end. This, I have no doubt, is as truly the dictate of natural religion, as of revelation. From the moral perfections of God, it follows, that he is friendly to virtue and hostile to vice. To make known his true char-

acter, this friendship and this hostility must be expressed. It will be far from him to suffer "the wicked to be as the righteous." Of course, if the righteous be happy, the unrighteous must be miserable. And if the divine purity would require a difference at one time, it would require, that such difference be continued, as long as their respective characters remain unchanged. If, therefore, sinners continue to exist forever, it seems fairly to result from the first principles of natural religion, that they will suffer without end.

Objections will probably be made to the supposition, that any, known by Deity to be incorrigible, should forever be sustained in being.—A reply to this objection is obvious. If to support in punishment a being, foreknown to be incorrigible, for the space of ten, or even twenty years, be consistent with divine wisdom and benevolence, it can never be shown, that these attributes would militate against his being sustained a longer time, or even forever. There may be as good reasons for his continuance the year to come, as the year past, and so on without end.

That the punishment of a future life will, in fact, have any respect to sins, then committed, and not exclusively to deeds, which are done in the body, I do not assert. The last argument is designed only to prove, that eternal punishment, in itself, is not incredible.

## LECTURE XXII.

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### *Eternity of future punishment.*

I shall now proceed in noticing those arguments, which are often used in opposition to the doctrine of endless punishment.

It is believed, by some, inconsistent with the character of a benevolent or even just God, to create any being, whose existence on the whole is worse than none: by consequence, none can be eternal sufferers.

The proposition here assumed, inevitably leads, I apprehend, to confound all moral qualities; i. e. to annihilate all distinction between virtue and vice.

If the vicious man may not be rendered miserable on the whole, i. e. have more misery than happiness, it must be because he does not deserve misery; but if vice, does not deserve punishment, virtue can surely deserve no reward.

Virtue is the fulfilment, and vice the breach of moral ob-

ligation. I can deserve no reward for doing what I am bound to do, if I deserve no punishment for doing that, which I am bound not to do. Of course, obedience and disobedience are equally without desert, and all distinction between virtue and vice is destroyed. Nor will this conclusion be, in any degree, invalidated, should it be said, as I apprehend it may with truth, that virtue itself deserves nothing more, than a freedom from suffering. Nay, the conclusion would be more striking on this ground, than on any other. For, if the man of unflinching virtue can claim, as a matter of right, nothing more than freedom from punishment, this is precisely what the proposition states to be the claim of the most vicious man on earth.

The matter may be viewed in another light. If the greatest offender on earth cannot consistently with justice, be miserable on the whole, i. e. have his existence rendered worse than none, and if any distinction at all could still be supposed to remain between the actions of moral agents, a sinner, somewhat less enormous, deserving proportionably better treatment, than the other, could lay claim to some positive reward: a sinner, still more moderate might claim a greater reward, and so on through the various shades of moral depravity. How clearly inconsistent this is with the express declarations of scripture, will appear from the following passages; "The wages of sin is death. The judgment came upon all men to condemnation. Cursed is every one, who continueth not in all things, written in the law, to do them."

It will be remembered, that on the subject in hand, scripture evidence must be decisive. Without the scripture has been observed, no person can be confident of a state; much less of the continuance either of reward or punishment. Now, if the testimony of scripture is decisive, and "the wages of sin is death," if "every one is liable to a curse, who continueth not in all things, written in the law to do them;" and if "judgment has come upon all men to

condemnation," how is it possible, that the greatest offender should deserve no punishment, and that a great majority of offenders should merit reward? Yet you clearly perceive, that to say of any being, that he deserves not more misery than happiness, is the same as to say, that on the whole, he deserves no punishment.

Among those, who deny the perpetuity of future punishment, or advocate the doctrine of final restoration, it is not uncommon to avow a belief in necessity, as the ground of their opinion. Every thing, say they, happens by irresistible necessity; and, therefore, those actions, denominated sins, are really worthy of no punishment: and, of course, all men will be happy.

There is, in this argument a very surprising leap between the premises and the conclusion, even should we allow the former to be true. If the doctrine were true, and if necessity annihilates all vice, you clearly perceive, that it likewise annihilates all virtue. By consequence, there would be no moral desert in any action whatever. But how creatures, who are, by the argument, as truly machines as a watch or a steam engine, and equally destitute of virtue, should yet be entitled to eternal rewards, or to any rewards, is not easily discovered.

Perhaps the objector may allow, that the doctrine of universal salvation does not follow from that of necessity: but is still confident, that future punishment cannot, on this hypothesis, be reconciled with the justice of God.

I answer, that most who believe the doctrine of necessity, suppose that the actions of Deity are no more free, than those of his creatures. Now, if necessity destroys all justice in men, it must, for the same reason, destroy all justice in God. If men are not morally wrong in doing those actions, which we call unjust, neither can he be morally wrong in doing the same. If necessity annihilates the morality of one being, it annihilates the morality of all, who act under its influence. It is preposterous, therefore, for



But all who use the argument which we are now considering, do, in the most palpable sense, "put darkness for light and light for darkness." It is evident then, not only that the uniform language of scripture condemns the proposition, on which this argument rests; but denounces a war against those, who attempt to maintain it.

We are now to notice another argument against the doctrine of endless punishment. It is this: "All punishment is disciplinary. No being can justly receive punishment unless it be inflicted with design eventually to promote his own advantage. Therefore it is with this design that God will award punishment in a future life. But if punishments are awarded for this end, Deity must foresee, that the end will, at some time, be accomplished: by consequence, all will experience not only a termination of their sufferings, but final happiness."

That the reformation of the sufferer, is frequently an end, for which punishment is inflicted, is not denied. But if punishment ever is, or can be inflicted for a different end, the argument fails. In attempting to ascertain its value, I observe

*First*, that in the mildest and most rational human governments, the object of many, perhaps of most laws, is not the benefit of individuals, considered as such, but the safety and happiness of the state. In regard to many laws, the object of punishment is doubtless twofold; viz. the sufferer's reformation and the common safety. In regard to many others, the object is exclusively the latter. Of this kind are all capital punishments. The laws never take life for the good of the sufferer; but evidently to deter others, and prevent the culprit from doing further injury. Nothing can be more evident, than the confusion and danger, which society would experience, were punishment never administered, but with a view to the individual's amendment and benefit. According to this mode of proceeding, the most enormous transgressors, and those, by whom the peace of the

community is most disturbed, would not only live, but enjoy impunity; for there is no probability, that the penalties of the law would on such persons, produce reformation. Small thefts, or other instances of dishonesty might be punished, as the delinquent would not be thought past reformation. But persons guilty of arson or murder, especially if they had committed these crimes frequently, would never fall under public censure. Nay further, it would not be just to punish such persons; it being assumed in the argument, that no punishment is just, but that which is disciplinary; and inveterate offenders may fairly be presumed to be incorrigible. The reasoning then, you see, comes to this: Justice requires, that small crimes be punished; but secures impunity to them, by whom the greatest are perpetrated. In other words, because a person has become enormously wicked, he deserves no punishment.

II. If punishment must be disciplinary in order to its being just, no descendant of Adam can be under obligation to his Creator's mercy, that he suffers no more.

Some persons are brought to repentance in this world, and some according to the theory, which we are considering, are made penitent by sufferings, endured beyond the grave. These sufferings are supposed to be just, because they are foreseen to issue in the sufferer's amendment. Of course, at the moment, when he does amend, justice has no further demand: any additional punishment would be tyrannical. No person, therefore, who is rendered penitent in this life, can acknowledge himself indebted to Christ for deliverance "from the wrath which is to come."

III. If no punishment is just, but that which is disciplinary, none but such a punishment is threatened in the divine law: for doubtless God has not threatened to do an unjust thing. All, therefore, who by discipline, whether in this world, or another, are brought to repentance, have suffered the "curse of the law;" i. e. that punishment, which the law threatens. In Gal. iii. 13. it is said, that "Christ

ath delivered us from the curse of the law." But if the opinion, which we are considering, is true, all persons actually suffer this curse; because they endure that discipline, whether mild or severe, whether present or future, which is necessary to bring them to repentance. It would follow then, at the reverse of St. Paul's assertion is true, and that Christ does not deliver men from the curse of the law: and will likewise follow, that if he did this, it would be an important injury: it would be delivering us from that, which is necessary to our amendment and salvation.

V. If this opinion be considered in another view, its consequences will be equally absurd: they will be, that salvation, instead of being enjoyed by all, will be enjoyed by none. Salvation is security from evil. This is agreeable to St. Paul's declaration, "Jesus delivereth us from the wrath, which is to come." Now, what is that wrath; what is that wrath from which men are delivered? It is either deserved or undeserved. It will hardly be said I think, that Christ came to deliver us from a punishment, which was undeserved: for if such punishment, unto the divine government is unjust, we were in no danger. It follows then, that Christ came to deliver us from a just punishment, but, by the supposition, no punishment is just, but that, which is disciplinary; i. e. necessary to bring the sinner to repentance. But this is the precise punishment, which, it is supposed, that all men endure. Therefore all must endure the curse of the law, or the wrath which is to come. The consequence of the opinion, viewed in this light, is that none will be saved.

VI. If the opinion, which we are considering, were true, it would be difficult to see what has been effected by the interposition of Christ. For, on this supposition, even now, the law has its full course. Every offender endures all that punishment, which it threatens, or can threaten with justice; he endures that discipline, which is requisite for his amendment. If it be said that the sufferings of Christ were

necessary to procure for men, positive happiness after amendment, I answer, that, as, by the supposition, human being, either in this world or in the next, sinned against the law, i. e. endures the penalty, which the law threatens, for ought, which appears, as fair a candidate for happiness by the law, as Adam was at the first moment of his probation. In regard to the law, he is perfectly right. If you tell him he once broke the law, he allows it; but immediately replies that he has paid the penalty. If a person has, this day, discharged a debt of ten years standing, he is as completely free from his creditor, as he was before the debt was contracted. If a person has been punished for some crime, imprisonment, when the term of his confinement is expired, he is as completely under the protection of the law, as an individual in the community. So, if men satisfy the law by that suffering which corrects their vices and reduces them to obedience, one can, by no means see, how the atonement of Christ should be necessary to render them happy.

VI. If no punishment is just, but that which is discretionary, it is evident, that offences can never be punished on account of the injury, which they occasion either to individuals, or to the community. In civil government, a man is not to be branded or imprisoned for dishonesty, because this crime renders property insecure, and excites owners to want: the incendiary is not to be punished, because he vents houses from being set on fire, and their inhabitants being consumed in the flames; the murderer is not to be punished, because he has shed human blood, brought distress on a family, and terror to the public, solely for his own advantage. The magistrate, unmindful of the public good, is to keep but one thing in view; and that is the good of the criminal.

Further, if this opinion were true, the Deity himself must proceed on the same principles. He must never be envious, hateful, malice, and impiety, because these are hateful in themselves, and dishonorable to him.

ernment, and injurious to his creatures. He must place, and preserve the sinner precisely in that situation where his individual happiness would be most advanced, whatever injury may be sustained by other beings, or even by the universe itself. How perfectly inconsistent these things would be with the common feelings and judgment of mankind, needs not to be shown.

Nor is the opinion under consideration, more opposed to human judgment, than it is to scripture. Let any one read the divine declarations concerning the future punishment of ungodly men, and say, whether they describe merely parental discipline, designed only for the recovery and final felicity of the sufferer. "Fear not them, who kill the body and after that have no more, that they can do : but fear him, who, when he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The wicked, it is said, "shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies ; and will reward them that hate me." Christ it is said, "shall be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them, who know not God." The apostle speaks of "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the former is represented, as requesting, that the latter might be sent to afford some alleviation to his extreme sufferings. Here was the fairest opportunity to suggest the sentiment, which we endeavor to oppose. Why did not Abraham say, what was well known to him, if this sentiment be just, "Your punishment is designed for your amendment ; and, as soon as you repent, it will expire. After which, you will participate the same felicity and glory, which are now enjoyed by the saints." Instead of this Abraham replied, "Between

us and you, there is a great gulf fixed ; so that they, who would pass from hence to you, cannot ; neither can they pass to us, who would come from thence."

But it has lately been suggested, that there is something in scripture phraseology, which favors the idea of disciplinary punishment. "The word *κολαζειν*, rendered to punish, in Matt. 25, and other places, properly signifies, we are told, correction, inflicted for the benefit of the offender." That this criticism has no foundation ; and that this word has the same general signification, as our English word, *punish*, will appear by the following evidence. In the first Olynthiac of Demosthenes, speaking of those who should be found iniquitous in the war against Philip, he advises, that they should be punished, *τους δ' ἀδικούντας πολεζειν*. Considering the manner, in which the Athenians were in the habit of punishing such delinquents, frequently with death, it is impossible to suppose, that the orator is speaking of correction, inflicted for the offenders benefit. Surely persons were not put to death for their own advantage. Lysias, in his oration against Eratosthenes, advises, in regard to the thirty tyrants, *that they should be punished by death*. No one can doubt the meaning of this passage or imagine, that Lysias was recommending means, by which the oppressors of Athens might improve their morals. The use of the terms, in the New Testament, which are translated *punishment* and *to punish* is by no means such as to support the criticism, against which we object.

## LECTURE XXIII.

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### *Eternity of future Punishment.*

PREVIOUSLY to bringing forward the positive proof, which supports the doctrine of endless punishment, it may be necessary to notice the two following objections, in addition to those, which were considered in the last lecture.

I. It is believed by some, that those passages of scripture, which speak of the wicked, as being consumed, destroyed &c. do not relate to the persons, but to the crimes of men. By such passages they understand, that the vices and bad dispositions of men will be destroyed, while men themselves, thus happily delivered from guilt, will be raised to partake of honor, and life eternal. If this sentiment be true, you perceive, that the persons of the wicked will not only not receive eternal punishment, but will receive no punishment at all.

To show the absurdity of this opinion, many words cannot be required. The language, in which the laws of God are expressed, is, in general, similar to that which is used by human legislators. In civil laws, the crime is stated, and the punishment attached to it. Persons, who steal,

rob, or break open houses, shall be imprisoned, placed in the pillory, set on the gallows, or punished with death. So the laws of God, as stated in the divine oracles, are, "The soul, that sinneth, it shall die.—He, that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.—Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.—The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment."

Now, should we allow, for a moment, that there is no absurdity in the idea of punishing sins, in the abstract, it would still be evident, that the language of scripture no more favors such an opinion, than the language of human laws. And a person, taking up a book of statutes, might as well understand, that neither dishonest persons, nor thieves, nor murderers were threatened; but only knavery, theft, and murder in the abstract, as he could understand the scriptures to threaten sin, and not the sinner.

We ought not, at any time, but especially when attempting to explain the scriptures, to use language without ideas. Now, let it be inquired, what is meant by those, who say, that the sins of wicked men, and not wicked men themselves, will be punished, thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, the place, prepared for the devil and his angels? It is no more conceivable, that sins, abstracted from their authors, should be punished in another state, than in the present. Suppose then, that one person threatens the life of another; the guilty person goes free; but the threatening itself is taken to prison, or perhaps is required to give bonds for good behavior. Another person is guilty of forgery; he himself is to be acquitted; but the crime is to be branded or condemned to hard labor. A third person is guilty of perjury; the person himself goes free, as in the former cases; but the perjury is punished with imprisonment, perpetual infamy or death. That reflecting persons should be satisfied, when the most alarming denunciations of scripture are explained in a manner, so palpably absurd, is not within the limits of possibility.



II. Some persons, unwilling to encounter the difficulties, attending the doctrine of universal salvation, and still rejecting that of endless punishment, have embraced, as a medium, the belief of annihilation. Of them, who cherish this opinion, some believe, that the wicked will be annihilated at death; while others suppose, that they will previously endure a punishment, proportionate to their crimes.

Each of these opinions will be briefly examined: and

I. That, which considers the existence of wicked men, as ending at death. Against this opinion are the following objections.

In many passages of scripture, the wicked are represented, as retaining their existence after the dissolution of the body. The rich sensualist is declared by Christ to be in torments. But annihilation, which destroys existence, most evidently precludes the possibility of suffering. Under this particular might be mentioned, the words of Christ, which declare, that in the place of punishment, there is "weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth." That actions should be attributed to creatures, not in existence, is a glaring solécism.

Again, the wicked, we are assured, will appear at the day of judgment: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another." Some will be condemned, and sent to immediate punishment. Now, this would be wholly impossible, if the wicked were annihilated at death. The dead could not stand before God, and be judged out of the things, written in the books, if they had been previously struck out of existence.

Further, we are informed not only that all men will stand before God; but that "all will receive according as their works have been." For some sinners it will be more tolerable, than for others, as there will be a difference in the number of stripes inflicted. But annihilation at death precludes every difference of this kind.

Let us now examine the opinion, that the impenitent will be annihilated, after having endured a punishment, proportionate to their offences.

The principal arguments, by which the doctrine of annihilation is defended, are taken from those passages, which threaten the wicked with death, destruction &c. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if, through the spirit, ye do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." The impenitent "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord &c."

Now, whatever plausibility the argument may have, if used to prove annihilation at death, it can have none in proof of the opinion, now under consideration. For, if the wicked, previously to annihilation, receive a punishment, proportionate to their demerit, annihilation is no part of their punishment. Their punishment consists in evils, previously endured. But when they are threatened with death, destruction &c. they are doubtless threatened with that punishment, which will in fact be incurred. Therefore, when they are threatened with death, they are threatened with a punishment to be endured previously to annihilation. Of course, death, destruction &c. express misery, and not annihilation.

All those passages of scripture, you perceive, which attribute perpetuity to future punishment, are inconsistent with the opinion now under consideration. The advocates of this sentiment, no less than the abettors of universal salvation, are therefore bound to show, that those passages do not express endless punishment.

Nor is it less obvious, that none, who consider future punishment, as disciplinary; or imagine that divine goodness will prevent any of the human race from being miserable on the whole, i. e. from having an existence, which is worse than none;—it is obvious, I observe, that none of these persons can, without inconsistency, admit the doctrine,

which we are endeavoring to disprove. For, if it be true, that the wicked, after having suffered a punishment, adequate to their demerit, will be annihilated, most evidently their punishment is not by way of discipline,—it is not designed for their good. Nor can it be denied, that such persons are miserable on the whole, as annihilation precludes the possibility of their being remunerated for sufferings, previously endured.

As to the terms destruction, death &c. when applied to the wicked, there is no more necessity for understanding them to signify annihilation, than there is necessity for believing, that sensual persons are annihilated during life, it being said by the apostle, that “she, who liveth in pleasure, is dead, while she liveth.”

We come now to consider those passages, which directly assert the endless duration of future punishment. “He, that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness; but is in danger of eternal damnation.—These are clouds, carried with a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.” A similar declaration is found in Jude. “The smoke of their torment ascended up forever and ever.—The devil that deceived them, shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

We have brought these texts together, rather than any other, for reasons, which will soon be apparent.

To elude the force of these strong passages, it will be replied, that the terms everlasting, forever &c. do not necessarily mean an endless duration. It is conceded, that the Greek word *αιων* does, not unfrequently in the New Testament, express an age, which has limits. As it is applied both to duration, which is limited, and to that which is unlimited: though somewhat more frequently to the latter, I do not imagine, that merely from the use of that word, the question before us could be decided. But, in a particular

construction, the word is used with more uniformity; I mean, when it is preceded by the preposition *εἰς*; which is the construction in all those passages, which have now been cited. This same word in the accusative, preceded by *εἰς* is found in fifty six places of Griesbach's copy of the New Testament. In our common copies, it is found in four other instances. In the six places quoted, future punishment is unquestionably the subject. In all places, excepting these, the phrase expresses endless duration. There is good reason, therefore, to believe, that in these instances, it has the same meaning.

In proof of the perpetuity of future punishment we now cite the following passages. "Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life, halt or maimed, rather than having two hands, or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. Then shall the king say to them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.—And these shall go away into everlasting punishment.—But he, that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven; but is in danger of eternal damnation.—Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction."

In all these places, the word translated *everlasting* is in the original, the adjective, derived from the noun whose signification we have just been noticing.

This word is used about seventy times in the New Testament. In more than forty instances, it is connected with *ζωή*, *life*, and expresses that future life, which is the gift of God to his saints. That this is endless, will not be called in question. That which is so generally denominated *eternal life*, is, in other places, called *everlasting habitations*, and a *house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*. It is likewise called, an *eternal weight of glory*, and *everlasting consolation*. When applied to these subjects, its signification must be the same, as when applied to *life*, as the same idea is conveyed by these various expressions. *Αἰώνιος*

is likewise applied to the *might and the glory* of God : in which application, its meaning is by no means equivocal. Out of the whole number of instances, in which the word is used, more than six cannot be found, of its importing less, than an endless duration. Nor is it *certain*, in regard to any one of these, that its import is limited : though the contrary cannot be made evident.

There is, for ought, which appears in the New Testament, as much uniformity in the original word, as in that by which it is rendered in English. We sometimes use the word *eternal*, without designing to express endless duration. But in such cases, the term does not change its meaning ; but we use it in a figurative manner. Between two nations, we say, that there existed an “ eternal enmity.” In this hyperbolical expression, we do not mean, that *eternal* signifies less, than endless, but we mean to express a great duration, though limited, by applying a term, signifying duration without limits.

Should any one choose to consider the matter in a light, somewhat different, and suppose, that whereas the word *eternal* originally signified a limited duration by a figure only ; such has now become its literal meaning, it would make no material difference. Let it be supposed, that an English divine in five or six places applies the word *eternal* or *everlasting* to the future punishment of the wicked ;—that he evidently uses the term, in about fifty places, to express an unlimited duration ; and in five or six instances applied the same word to human contention, or some object of a temporary nature ; no one, it is believed, would stop to inquire, whether this use were literal or figurative, in order to ascertain what were the author’s sentiments on the subject of future punishment. It would be universally understood that the author believed in its endless continuance. But, in this statement, somewhat more is conceded, than is necessary. We have considered it as a given point, that the writer here mentioned, uses the word *eternal* in five or six instances

to express merely a limited duration. That the Greek word, answering to this, is once used by the writers of the New Testament in this limited sense, is far from being certain, though it is not improbable.

In addition to this let it be considered, that in the very same sentence, in which the future life of the righteous is said to be eternal, the punishment of the wicked is asserted to be eternal. *These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.* That in the latter part of the sentence, the word *αιωνιος* signifies duration without end, cannot be questioned: that it should mean less in the former, especially considering the common import of the term, is by no means credible.

It will readily occur to you, that unless the scriptures prove the eternity of future *punishment*, they do not prove the eternity of future rewards, nor even the eternal existence of the soul. And, if the pains of reprobates will have an end, so, for ought, which appears, may the happiness of the righteous.

But the arguments, drawn from the words *εις αιωνας* and *αιωνιος*, however cogent, are far from being the only ones, which support the doctrine in question; which doctrine might have been proved from scripture, even if these terms had never been used. Consider the following passage, recorded in the 9th chapter of Mark. "If thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire, that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." It is difficult to conceive, whence language more powerful and more determinate, could be obtained. That the fire in which the wicked shall suffer, is not quenched, our Saviour has asserted no less, than five times, within the compass of a few verses. It has, I well know, been replied, that allowing the fire to be unquenchable, and the worm immortal, it does not hence follow, that the wicked will be eternally tormented by the one or the other. This answer is too trifling to give satisfaction.

For what imaginable reason should our Saviour speak so explicitly and so repeatedly of the perpetuity of the fire, unless it were to be the perpetual instrument of punishment to the sinner? Its duration is mentioned by our Saviour, as a weighty motive to deter from crimes. But of what importance is it to the wicked, whether the fire, from which they were delivered be extinguished, or maintained?

Concerning those, in the invisible world, it is said, "Let him, who is unjust, be unjust still, and let him, who is filthy, be filthy still."—What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?—To the wicked God says, "I will laugh at your calamity and mock, when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind."—It is said of the wicked, that they "shall be destroyed without remedy:" and repeatedly, that their "hopes shall perish."

Further, our Saviour said concerning Judas, "It had been good for that man, if he had not been born." As an argument against the final salvation of all men, this passage is conclusive. For, if salvation is universal, Judas is not excluded. But if Judas partakes of salvation, his existence is inexpressibly valuable. Suppose him to endure as great sufferings as you please, yet being limited, they bear no proportion to the glory, which is to follow. His existence on the whole, would therefore, be to him, immeasurably advantageous.

It would be easy to accumulate passages of scripture, similar, in their import, to those which have been adduced. It is believed, however, that the evidence already exhibited is sufficient to prove, that the punishment of the wicked has no end. But to prove a doctrine, is one thing: to make men feel and live, as if it were true, is another. The latter, in regard to the doctrine, now discussed, is far the more difficult. By persons, who entertain a holy confidence in the government of God, the subject may, perhaps, be contemplated without agitation, though not without the

In view of this painting, so vivid and so terrific, you perhaps exclaim, the doctrine must be false. Then I will make but one request : it is, that you would abandon every immorality, all profane language, all contempt of the Lord's day, all dissipation ; and exhibit the feelings of rational beings and christians, till you can prove the doctrine false, or even incredible. Do this, and I am silent forever.

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## LECTURE XXIV.

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### *Resurrection.*

THOUGH in contemplating human mortality our first anxiety is naturally, and with good reason, directed to the intellectual part of our natures, it is impossible to avoid all anticipation of that change, which death produces in the human body. As the body has been our constant companion from the first moment of our being until the present time ; as it has been the medium, through which many pains and many pleasures have been communicated ; as its preservation has engrossed so considerable a portion of our thoughts ; it is by no means surprising, that a kind of dread is excited, at looking forward to the time, when all its functions shall cease, when its parts shall be separated, and when it shall be concealed in the earth, to prevent it from being either injurious or offensive to the living.

Though, without revelation, it would not occur to man, that his body would be re-organized and revived, the thought, whenever suggested, could scarcely fail of meeting the most cordial welcome. The desire of existence is universal



And, though this desire is peculiarly strong in relation to the soul, it extends with no inconsiderable power to the body.

Our present attention will be directed to that doctrine, which teaches the resurrection of the dead.

Though the Stoics believed, that certain revolving periods would produce successive renovations in the system of the universe, it does not appear, that any tenet, similar to the christian doctrine of a resurrection was believed, or even known, among the pagan philosophers. However congenial this doctrine is to the native feelings of man, the opinion, which some of these philosophers entertained as to the inherent malignity of matter, and its influence in contaminating the soul, would have led them to view an eternal separation from it, as a thing more desirable, than a permanent reunion. When certain Epicureans and Stoics at Athens heard St. Paul discourse of Jesus and the resurrection, they treated him contemptuously: observing that he seemed to be a proclaimer of foreign deities; not understanding, as it is believed by very learned commentators, the term, which is translated resurrection; but conceiving that *ἀναστάσις*, as well as *Ἰησους*, was represented by St. Paul, as an object of worship.

The doctrine of a resurrection was not expressly taught to the Jews by their inspired lawgiver.

There is but one passage of scripture, I suppose, which will be thought to militate with this remark. It is found in the 22d ch. of Matthew. On a certain occasion, the Sadducees, who denied not only the resurrection, but the existence of angels and spirits, came to our Saviour with design to perplex him, by asking, to whom would belong, in the resurrection, the woman, who had been wife to seven brethren. Jesus, having first answered, that in the resurrection there is neither marrying, nor giving in marriage, adds, "But, as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living?"

As our Saviour's interpretations of scripture are infallible, and as he here refers to a passage in the writing of Moses, in proof of the resurrection, it may be objected, that one passage, at least, in these writings, teaches this doctrine.

The assertion which we have made, you will observe, is only, that this doctrine was not by Moses expressly taught. That it was taught by implication, I neither affirm nor deny. Let any one revolve in his mind these words, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," and he will, I apprehend, hardly profess himself able to discern, how they directly prove, that the dead will be raised. At the time, when the words were uttered, the bodies of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were dead; no language, therefore, could be designed to prove them alive.

The Sadducees, it has been observed, denied the future existence of the soul; and this was probably their principal reason for denying the resurrection. Our Lord, it seems, aimed to prove the former of these, in order, that he might remove their objections against the latter. God called himself, says he, in the time of Moses, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. But he would not call himself the God of any not living. Therefore, these patriarchs were then living. Now, though this conclusion, could be applied only to the soul; yet, as the Sadducees denied the future existence of the soul, to prove such existence was much to his purpose. If there had been any other passage in the books of Moses, more directly proving the resurrection of the body, this, it may fairly be presumed, would not have been cited: and, if there be none, it will hardly be pretended, I think, that the doctrine is expressly taught in these books. In our Saviour's time, however, the resurrection of the body was believed by many among the Jews. This opinion was held, it appears, by the sect of the Pharisees. For, when it is said, of the Sadducees, that they deny the resurrection, and the existence of angels and spirits, it is added, "But the Pharisees confess both." And when Jesus said to Martha,

"Thy brother shall rise again," she replied, "I know, that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

This opinion was probably collected from a number of passages in the prophetic writings, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye, that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs; and the earth shall cast out the dead." If this passage is designed to be taken literally, it distinctly proves a resurrection of the body. But if it is figurative, intended to foreshow the restoration of the Jews, still without supposing some knowledge of the doctrine, we should hardly expect, that such a figure would be used. A similar remark will apply to the well known passage in Ezekiel, in which is mentioned the valley of dry bones. After the vision, the prophet was directed to say, "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves and cause you to come out of your graves." Another more striking passage is found in Daniel. "And many who shall sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake: some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." In Job the 19th chapter, we have language, the apparent import of which strongly favors the doctrine in question.

In the septuagint version, which was commonly used by the Jewish nation, in our Saviour's time, we find a remarkable addition to the last verse of the book of Job., "So Job died, being old and full of days; but 'tis written, that he shall rise again, with those, whom the Lord raises up." This last clause, whether it be part of the original book, proves only, that whenever the passage was written, some ideas were entertained as to a resurrection.

It is not my present purpose to inquire, whether in all, or any of the passages, cited from our English version, the literal and obvious meaning is the true one. I only remark, that it must have been from such passages, as these, whether rightly or wrongly explained, that the doctrine of a

resurrection had, among the Jews, even before the introduction of christianity, obtained so considerable a currency.

In the apocryphal writings, there is a remarkable passage, showing, that on the minds of some, this doctrine had the most powerful practical influence. When the seven brethren were tormented by the impious Antiochus, for not violating their law, one of them is represented as saying, "The king of the world shall raise us up, who have died for laws, unto everlasting life." Speaking of the members of his body, "These saith he, I have received from heaven, and for his laws I despise them; and from him I hope to receive them again."

But whatever be our opinion as to the degree of evidence, afforded by the ancient dispensation in support of the doctrine, the divine author of christianity has, in the largest sense, "brought life and immortality to light." He has shown not only, that the grave cannot confine the soul, but even, that the body shall be set free from its bondage.

This expectation, it appears was observed by the pagan enemies of the Gospel as the cause, why christians so willingly and courageously encountered death. And it was with design to frustrate this hope, that their persecutors consumed their bodies, and scattered their ashes in the rivers.

The importance, which christianity attaches to this doctrine, is asserted by St. Paul, in very strong terms. "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." This reasoning the apostle repeats in a following verse.

We now proceed to notice those texts in the New Testament, by which the doctrine in discussion is directly proved. "This is the will of him, that sent me, that every one, that seeth the Son and believeth on him, should have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.—The hour cometh, when they, who are in their graves, shall hear the voice of God and come forth.—If the spirit of him, that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he, that raised up Jesus from the

dead, shall also quicken," that is, make alive, "your mortal bodies.—As in Adam all die; so in Christ shall all be made alive." The former part of this sentence expresses the death of the body; the latter part, its revival. There shall be saith the same apostle, a "resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust." St. John, as appears from the revelation, had a vision of "the dead both small and great, standing before God.—Even we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of the body."

That this doctrine implies no impossibility, is apparent, both from the nature of the case and from particular facts.

I. From the nature of the case. He, who creates, must be able to renew. He, who first collected and united the various parts of the human body, and organized them according to his pleasure, can never want power to recompose and revive the same body. The substance of the human frame is collected from the air and water, from vegetables and from other animals. Vegetables, produced in one quarter of the globe, unite with those, which are reared in another, to increase its vigor, and advance its growth. Particles of these bodies, which we now possess, once belonged, it may be, to distant islands and continents: they once passed into the canes of India, or were suspended from the figtrees of Turkey. Were the mass, thus composed once dissolved, would either more power or more wisdom be required for the reunion of its parts, than was employed in its original formation or its subsequent support? St. Paul's appeal to Agrippa was therefore unanswerable, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"

II. The possibility of the resurrection has been proved from particular facts. Three persons were raised from the dead by our Saviour; Dorcas, the widow's son of Nain, and Lazarus. Jesus himself rose from the grave. At his death many bodies of saints, that slept, arose, and went into the holy city and appeared to many.

There can be no more difficulty in restoring to life one body, than another ; and it is absurd to speak of the impossibility of an event which has already happened.

Our next inquiry is, concerning those bodies, to which the soul shall be united.

I. The language of scripture leads us to consider them, as the same with those, which the soul inhabited previously to death. "If the spirit of him, that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he, that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies." Here the revived body is declared to be that *mortal body*, which was the original tenement of the soul. To the same purpose is the passage, already cited. "They, who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth." As nothing but the body is left in the grave, nothing else can come forth out of it. That body which was raised, is the same, therefore, which was deposited in the grave.

Further, we are told by St. Paul, in the fifteenth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, that at the resurrection, "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and that this mortal shall put on immortality." The word *body* is doubtless to be here supplied. The meaning must therefore be, This corruptible body shall be incorruptible, and this mortal body shall become immortal. Hence you perceive, that the body which existed before death, is represented, as existing afterwards, notwithstanding the great change, which it must undergo. It is the same body, though in one case *mortal*, and in the other *immortal*.

A similar mode of expression is continued through the chapter. "It is sown a mortal body : it is raised a spiritual body." As the pronoun *it* must have the same reference in both these clauses, identity is predicated of the body at both these periods.

But though we are justified by these scriptures, in saying, that the body raised, shall be the same with that deposited, we are not under the necessity of concluding that it will

consist of the same numerical parts. When the saints shall arise, we cannot rationally believe, that their bodies will be marked by the diseases, of which they died. We cannot suppose, that bodies will then be seen, enlarged by a drop-sy, or emaciated by consumption: or that those, who died, after having lost some parts of the body, will appear with this defect, when they shall be raised again.

If you ask, how the raised body can be the same, which died, unless it consist of the same numerical parts, I answer, that there is no reason to think, that the apostle was more rigid in the use of language, than other writers; or that he comprehended more than others, in the term identity. Now it is well known, that our bodies, while living, are continually undergoing a change. Particles are constantly going off and new ones are added. Yet we do not consider, that corporal identity is hereby destroyed. If it were, the body of no living person would continue the same for two hours. One tree does not, either by age or growth, become another. The full grown elm is the tree, which its possessor once transplanted. Now, if such changes, either in vegetable or animal bodies, do not destroy identity, neither will the sameness of the human body be destroyed, because some particles are either lost, or added.

The following objection is sometimes made to the doctrine, under discussion. Particles of a human body may, after death, constitute part of a vegetable; and this again may be incorporated with another human body. Two persons, therefore, may, at different periods, die in possession of the same particles. But, that two bodies should, at the same time, viz. at the resurrection, have the same particles, is an absurdity.

To this objection we return a twofold answer. I. If the same numerical parts were necessary, to constitute the same body; as it has been divinely declared, that the same bodies shall rise, the wisdom and veracity of God would be engaged to prevent the occurrence, here contemplated.

But II. if, as we have endeavored to show, all the same numerical parts are not essential to the same body, the objection ceases to have any weight.

Though the body after the resurrection will be greatly changed from what it previously was, the scriptures authorize us to speak of it as the same body. How great a change may be produced without destroying the propriety of this language, it would not be easy to define. Such language, as the scriptures contain, would not, I think, be used, however, if the renewed body contained none of the parts, which the mortal body possessed. Without this, it would hardly be said, that those, who are in their graves will come forth; that these bodies shall be quickened; and that this mortal shall put on immortality.

But whatever may be the addition or diminition of parts, that there will be a great change in appearance and qualities, is certain. "Though sown in weakness, it shall be raised in power; though sown in dishonor, it shall be raised in glory; though sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body." Instead of that imbecility, in which mortal bodies participate, its members shall be complete, active, and vigorous. Instead of that humble, ghastly, or deformed state, in which the body appears, when deposited in the earth, it shall be raised glorious in beauty. Instead of an animal body, having passions, and appetites, and wants, suited to the present material state, it shall become spiritual and refined, free from gross incumbrances, and from those appetites, which are hostile to intellectual and moral improvement.

There is reason to believe, that the bodies of saints will at the resurrection, be covered with a celestial splendor. This is proved not only by that passage in St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, already quoted, but likewise from other passages in both parts of the sacred volume. "They, that are wise, saith Daniel, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they, that turn many to righteousness,



as the stars forever and ever." To this, the words of our Saviour have a remarkable resemblance. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father." This splendid body will, it appears, resemble that which is possessed by our Lord in glory. Their vile bodies shall be changed, saith the apostle, and "fashioned like unto his glorious body."

What kind of change, is here meant, we may perhaps form some idea, by certain facts, which the scriptures record. So intense was the splendor of Moses' countenance, when he descended from the mount, that the children of Israel could not endure it. The spectators, who witnessed the martyrdom of Stephen, "saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel." Such, but more glorious was the appearance of our Saviour, at his transfiguration. "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment became white and glistening; exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth could white them."

As further evidence of the change, which will be produced in the human body, it is said, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither can corruption inherit incorruption."

From this passage, it is further evident, that by the identity of the mortal and immortal body, the apostle did not design to exclude a very essential alteration. But, that this change is both possible and real, we are taught by the ascension of Christ. His body was raised from the grave, a material body. It was sensible to the touch. It was handled by St. Thomas. It was nourished by food. This body ascended from earth, and was received into heaven. Still, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. In the act of ascending, a change was therefore, produced; and it became that which the apostle calls Christ's *glorious body*. Agreeably to this the same apostle informs us, that when the last trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised

those, who are alive and remain, will not die, but will all be instantly changed.

When we consider the sudden and wonderful changes, which are produced in substances, by chemical application; and that opaque bodies are by such application, rendered translucent, I know not, that in regard to Enoch, Elijah, our Saviour, and those who shall be living at the day of judgment, there is any necessity to deny, that the very same particles compose their bodies, both before and after this mighty change.

In regard to the change, to be produced at the resurrection, in the bodies of wicked men, we have little or no information. As the bodies of saints will be immortal and incorruptible, so, we have reason to believe, will be the bodies of the wicked. In that glory and splendor, which will beautify the former, the latter cannot partake. This would ill agree with that *shame and everlasting contempt*, to participate which, they shall be roused from the slumbers of the tomb. When the doctrine of a resurrection is mentioned in scripture, it is usually in application to the righteous. Though this suited the design of the sacred writers, the universality of a resurrection is left in no uncertainty. In the words of our Saviour, already cited, we are taught, that all who are in their graves, shall come forth: not only "they, who have done well, to the resurrection of life; but they, who have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation." And St. Paul, when brought before Felix, states it as an important part of his preaching, that "there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just, and of the unjust."

Our future bodies, it appears, will be, as our present are, the channel, through which pleasure or pain will be conveyed to the mind. "Fear him," saith our Lord, "who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." This destruction of the soul and body can mean nothing but their punishment. In this therefore, the body will partake; or rather, it shall be the medium, through which the mind shall suf-

fer. The greatest possible degrees of that pain which living bodies are capable of enduring, is happily known but to few. What intense agonies may be endured by immortal, incorruptible bodies, can be conceived by none before the day of judgment. Each one of the senses may be an inlet to misery; and pain may be seated in every member. To ~~use~~ the powerful language of inspiration, "it may come into their bowels like water, and like oil into their bones."

And if the various parts of those bodies, which shall be restored to reprobates, will be the medium of suffering, it is analogous, that the bodies of just men made perfect, should be restored to them for an opposite purpose. Though such parts of the body, as are calculated merely for an earthy state, can have no use, and will probably have no existence in the celestial world; it is by no means absurd to suppose, that a refined system of matter, resembling the glorified body of Jesus Christ, may become the vehicle of enjoyment.

Hence it is, I conceive, that the intermediate state, between death and the resurrection, though clearly taught in scripture, is sparingly mentioned. When the sacred writers speak of a retribution, they generally refer to the day of judgment. "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind, for they cannot recompense thee, for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." The first epistle to the Thessalonians is so remarkable for its frequent allusions to the day of Christ's appearing, and for omitting all mention of any previous retribution, as to lead some to conclude, though very unjustly, that the apostle either viewed the day of judgment as nigh at hand, or else believed, that the soul would remain insensible, until that period.

I close this lecture with a few remarks.

When we survey, or cherish these bodies, which we now possess, let us anticipate the changes, for which they are destined. They will soon be sown in dishonor. Of all

portions of matter, they will be most offensive and most unpleasant to the sight. To use the language of Isaiah "the worm shall be spread under them, and worms shall cover them." Still shall these bodies, in myriads, rise immortal from the ground. They shall burst forth into new and endless existence.

While this consideration is most joyous to all the disciples of Him, who is "the resurrection and the life," it is fraught with alarm and terror to the impenitent. At present, whatever pain is violent, cannot be of long duration. The human frame is soon overcome by its intensity.

But the bodies of the wicked will be raised immortal and indissoluble: and thus prepared for all the sufferings, which a righteous God has reserved for them. There will then be no hopes of annihilation to allay the fears of those, who now set themselves against the moral government of the most High. Their existence and their misery will be alike interminable.

## LECTURE XXV.

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### *On Demoniacs.*

Among the miracles, wrought by our Saviour, and recorded by the evangelists, the recovery of persons, apparently under the influence of evil spirits, holds a conspicuous place.

The common opinion, among Christians, has been, that the accounts of these miraculous cures, are to be literally understood; and, of course, that evil spirits had such possession of the afflicted persons, as to produce disorder in body, or mind, or perhaps in both.

Another opinion has been embraced by no inconsiderable number; viz. that the persons, said to be possessed, were under the influence of natural disorders;—but disorders of such a kind, as had been by heathens and Jews, especially the former, attributed to the influence of evil spirits, and that the common language was restrained by Christ and the evangelists, though neither of them designed to countenance belief in real possession.

Our present design is to make an inquiry into this subject.

Lest there should be any misconception, I would observe, that both sides are agreed, that whatever may have been the

origin of these disorders, the cure was miraculous. So that whatever may be our ideas as to the inferences which might be made from either of these opinions, we are not to charge those, who hold either the one or the other, as doubting the divine authority of Christ or the integrity of the evangelists. Although a very great majority of christians have believed in the doctrine of real possessions, the other has been defended by men of no less reputation, than Drs. Joseph and Richard Mead, Dr. Sykes, Dr. Lardner, and Mr. Hugh Farmer.

I begin by observing, that the existence of evil spirits, whether denominated satan, devils, or dæmons, is by no means inconsistent with reason.

So far, as we are able to examine the works of God, there is a striking and regular gradation. The lowest effort of creative power appears to be dull, unorganized matter. Stones and metals seem entitled to a superior rank. These, however, as proof of divine wisdom, are not to be placed on a level with vegetables. In vegetables there is great diversity. But the lowest may be considered as higher than any individuals in the mineral kingdom. The sensitive plant seems to approximate to animal life. Among brute animals, the series may be traced from the most sluggish, to those, which display the greatest sagacity and sprightliness. From the latter, to the least intelligent of our own race, the chasm seems not to be very wide. From these the gradation is continued, till we arrive at those rare geniuses, which, to the rest of men, are objects of admiration.

Now, as the series may be traced thus far, is its greater extent improbable? Will any person pretend to be confident, that man is the highest effect of creative wisdom?—that there is not, in the universe, any race of dependent beings, superior to our own? On this subject, without revelation, no certainty could be ascertained: but surely it is not difficult to ascertain, on which side there is most probability.

Revelation enables us to decide in favor of that, which was before probable.

But if there are creatures of rank, superior to man, analogy will justify the supposition, that they either are, or have been in a state of probation. The very idea of probation supposes, that they who are tried, may conduct amiss. Human beings have thus conducted, and are depraved. No person, I think, will assert, that there is the least shadow of incredibility in the supposition, that some among superior intelligences have done the same. If they have, their character corresponds, in general, with that which is assigned in scripture to a being of great intellectual powers, called the devil, satan, the accuser, &c.

These beings, from their character, would not be peaceable subjects of the divine government. Moral evil is of the same nature, whatever be the intellectual rank of those to whom it belongs. If there be bad angels, therefore, they resemble bad men, with this difference, that their powers are much greater; and, having existed a much longer time, their habits of sinning are proportionably more inveterate. If, in addition to this, it be supposed, that their doom is determined, and they are placed beyond the hope of recovery, further reasons will be apparent, why their malignity should be decisive, open, and without restraint. Such beings would be strongly inclined to injure the other subjects of Jehovah's empire. If you ask, why they should, I reply, For the same reasons, which induce men, whose depravity is unspeakably less, to be injurious to each other. Individuals of our own species are hostile among themselves. Nations employ their whole ingenuity in devising methods of distressing those, with whom they are at war. This proceeds less commonly from malice, than from pride or unrestrained self love; though not unfrequently from all these. The very existence of evil spirits, makes it credible, that so far as permission is given, they are injurious to other beings.

Is it then, either incredible, or highly improbable, that

such permission should be given ; which is to say, that other beings should sometimes be in a situation, exposed to their malevolence ?

Your first impression perhaps is, that if creatures of such pernicious character exist, the goodness of God requires, that they be so restrained, as that others shall receive from them no injury. However plausible this conjecture may appear, it is not supported by analogy. Vicious men are permitted to act with freedom ; and many others are placed within their power. They do, in fact, produce extensive injury. No inconsiderable part of human sufferings, results from the abuse of that power, with which wicked men are entrusted. One tyrant may disturb, and does disturb the peace of millions. Now, it is, I presume, perfectly clear to your apprehensions, that the same difficulty exists in both cases. We should before hand presume, as confidently, that *wicked men* would be restrained from doing injury, as, that such restraints should be imposed on *other vicious beings of superior rank*. But, as facts show, that our conjecture would, in one case, be erroneous, it is probably not less so in the other.

Let it now be considered, that the scriptures speak with great frequency, not only of the existence of an evil spirit, as principal, and others, acting under his influence, but likewise of the interest which they take in human concerns.

In the Mosaic account of the fall of man, those powers are attributed to the serpent, which it is well known, do not belong to brute animals ; such as speech, intelligence, and the power of reasoning. Nor do I know how this account can be rationally explained without supposing the serpent, actuated by an invisible, intelligent being, of insidious and malignant character. In 1. Chron. xxi. i. it is said, that *satan* provoked David to number the people. In the book of Job, his existence and agency are strongly asserted, as likewise in the prophecy of Zechariah.

In the New Testament, this evil spirit is denominated *the god of this world* : than which expression, nothing can more



avidently imply the interest, which he takes, and the power, which he exerts, in human offices. To destroy the works of the devil is declared to be the great object of our Saviour's advent. But our Saviour's office related entirely to men. It was for the inhabitants of this world, that his instructions and sufferings were immediately designed. By consequence, this earth is the theatre of those works of the devil, which Christ came to destroy. It is further noticeable, that the progress of christianity is represented in the following language, *I beheld satan as lightning fall from Heaven*. These passages clearly prove, that the world which we inhabit, is not secure from satanical influence. But the scriptures inform us more fully and more minutely. They represent, that this influence is not confined either to the bodies, or the souls of men, but is occasionally exerted on both. His great object is to corrupt the mind, and not unfrequently to injure the body. It was he, we have seen, who allured our first parents to taste the prohibited fruit. It was he, who provoked David to number the people. Christians are required to stand against *the wiles of the devil*. The apostle speaks of him as "an adversary going about, seeking whom he may devour." Bad men are mentioned, as "led captive by him at his will:" and yet, as within the possibility of being recovered from his snares. And our Saviour has taught us, that the devil comes and takes away the word from the hearts of indocile hearers, lest they should believe and be saved. Now, I well know, that the authority, here adduced is sufficient to substantiate any narrative; and that no person, who does not reject revealed religion, can question facts which rest on such foundation. Yet it may not be altogether useless to observe, that the doctrine of these passages is supported by analogy. Vicious men are not contented to keep their vices to themselves; and the more excessive their vices are, the greater effort do they make to propagate them. As soon therefore, as it is shown, that there are devils or vicious beings, superior to man, it becomes, in

a high degree, probable, even without any express testimony, that such beings will use their power in disseminating their own vices,—in promoting rebellion against the divine government.

Nor have the scriptures been less particular in showing, that satanical influence has, at some times, been exerted to injure the bodies of men. To such influence they attribute the tormenting disorder, under which Job suffered. Of one of the patients, restored by our Saviour, he speaks thus; "This woman, whom satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years." When St. Peter first instructed Cornelius in christianity, he represented its author, as "anointed by the Holy Ghost, and with power; and going about doing good, and healing all, who were oppressed of the devil."

Let us now suppose an objector introduced, who observes, "All which you have already endeavoured to prove, I am not much concerned to refute." In those passages, which have been quoted, *Satan* or *Devil*, is the term used. That there is such a being as this may perhaps, without great reluctance, be conceded. But as yet, the subject, originally mentioned, has not been entered upon. That subject was *demoniacs* or persons said to be possessed. But from these persons, it is never said by Christ, or the evangelists, that Satan was ejected, or that Devils were ejected: the term, used on these occasions, is always either *δαίμονες* or *δαιμονία*. Now, the number of persons said in the gospel to be possessed is very considerable; and this distinction being uniformly preserved, there is reason to think, that when Christ or the evangelists used the term *daemon*, they never meant the same as when they spake of the *Devil* or *Satan*.

In reply I acknowledge the facts in general stated in the objection. Possessions are attributed usually if not invariably to *dæmons*, and not to *devils*.

The term *δαίμων*, occurs three times in the gospels, and

twice in the apocalypse. The word *δαίμωνιον* is found in the New Testament about sixty times. The word *δαμονιζομαι*, *δαμονιζομαι* meaning possessed by dæmons, is used in thirteen places. Moreover the word *διαβολος* is never used in the plural number when applied to any but human beings. That this word and *satanas* mean the same thing, there can be no doubt. And considering, that neither of these words, when not applied to men, is used in the plural number, and possessions, with but one; if any exception, are attributed to dæmons, which word is frequently used in the plural number, the probability is so strong, as to be little short of certainty, that the individual being, called satan or the devil, was not the immediate agent in those, who are said to have been dæmonized or possessed. I say, not the immediate agent; for he may have been, and probably was, the principal, or commander over those less elevated, but numerous spirits, called dæmons. Both they and he, it is evident, are of the same moral character. They are alike in opposition both to God and men.

That Satan is the enemy of God, needs not to be proved. That the dæmons are such, is evident from this consideration, that they are condemned to be tormented. Those, who possessed the man at Gadara, exclaimed to our Saviour, "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" None, but the enemies of God, are reserved for punishment.

The dæmons manifested their hostility to men, by the bodily sufferings, which they occasioned. The hostility of satan, or the devil was exhibited in the same manner, as appears from two passages, already cited; in one of which our Saviour speaks of a daughter of Abraham, whom satan had bound eighteen years; in another, it is said, that Jesus went about "healing all those, who are oppressed of the devil."

Now as satan and the dæmons are spirits of the same moral character, and both have displayed their malignity by doing injury to the bodies of men, it does not seem at all

material to determine how great may be their resemblance, in other respects, or why both do not pass under the same name.

There is, however, a remarkable passage in the 25th of Matthew, which ought to be noticed in connexion with this subject. There we read of a "place, prepared for the devil and his angels." There is, in my mind, a very strong presumption, that by the *angels* of satan, here spoken of, are meant the *dæmons*.

Mr. Farmer, whose name has already been mentioned, and who has written, with great ingenuity and learning against possessions, as commonly understood, argues in the following manner. The terms, answering to *dæmon* among the Greeks, designate heathen deities, many and perhaps most of whom, were the souls of dead men. He shows, that the Jews and early christians *sometimes* used the term in the same sense. "Now," saith he, "the sacred writers having given us no notice of their using the word in a new or peculiar sense, did certainly employ it in reference to possessions, in the same sense in which other persons did." His inference is, that as Christ and the evangelists believed in one God only, and did not believe, that human souls went from one body to another, they could not design to assert, that the persons possessed, were under any supernatural influence whatever; but must have meant this only, that the persons in question, had those disorders, whether of body or mind, which were usually attributed to *dæmons*.

In reply to this I observe 1st. that if the premises be just, there is between them and the conclusion, a very enormous chasm.

The Greeks and the Jews, and even early christians used the term *dæmons* to signify pagan gods, or the souls of dead men. Christ and the evangelists did not use the term in any new sense. What is the inference? Irresistibly this, that Christ and the evangelists used the terms to signify pagan gods, or human souls. But this conclusion is, saith Mr.

Farmer, inconsistent with fact. Unquestionably it is. What then are we to do? Nothing can be more certain, than that where an inference, legitimately made, is false, the reasoning is good, but the premises are bad. If it were true then, that the Jews, Greeks, and christians did invariably use the words answering to *dæmon*, to signify human souls or pagan gods, it would follow, that Christ and those who wrote the gospels, did *not* use it in the same sense, in which others used it. But, it is not true, even by the concessions of this learned author, that the word *dæmon* among the Greeks *always* signified beings of human origin. He allows, that some philosophers taught, that pagan demons were evil spirits of a rank, superior to mankind, and that many of the christian fathers were of the same opinion. Therefore, Christ and the evangelists might have used these words, as they had been previously used by some of the Greeks, and as they were frequently afterwards used by some of the christian fathers, and yet have meant by them neither less, nor more, than evil spirits of a rank superior to mankind; which perfectly corresponds with the ideas, usually entertained of possessions.

Another argument, distinct from this, ought not to be omitted. It is certain, that the word *θεος*, among the Greeks, was frequently applied to dead men, and seldom or never applied to such a being, as Jehovah, or the God and Father of Jesus Christ. Yet, that the writers of scripture apply the term to this glorious Being, will not be denied. It is evident then, that some words are used by the sacred writers, to express characters, very different from those, to which the same terms were applied among the Greeks. So that were it fact, which even by concession, it is not, that the Greeks before the coming of Christ, or the christian fathers afterwards, invariably used the term *dæmon* to signify characters, different from those, to which possessions are commonly attributed, it would not follow, that Christ and the evangelists used this term in the same manner.

It may be objected, that though this word was by the Greeks, applied to beings very different from Jehovah, yet at the time of our Saviour, the Jews had long been habituated to the septuagint version, in which the term is applied to Jehovah; and therefore, in such use there could have been no ambiguity.

In answer to this, I observe, that there was a time, when the septuagint version was made. At that time, the word above mentioned was applied to a being, extremely different from those, who had been previously designated by that term. Therefore, were it necessary to suppose, that the term *daemon* carries a different meaning in sacred, from what it does in profane writings, such change of meaning would have been analogous to another well known fact; and therefore not incredible.

Dr. Lardner's testimony on this subject, is of great value, not only on account of his learning, integrity, and candor, but because he is known not to have held those sentiments, which we endeavor to defend. "As the full punishment, (says he,) of fallen angels, as well as of bad men, was deferred to the great day of general judgment; it was the opinion of many at that time, that some of those evil angels and spirits, were allowed, (though not without control,) to visit the region of our air, and this earth, and to inflict diseases and other calamities on men. Of this number, continues he, are these unclean spirits," meaning thereby those which went out of the man and passed into the swine, and which are, by the evangelist, denominated *dæmons*.

It is hence evident, from the concession of this learned writer, not only that many, at the time, when our Saviour was on earth, were of opinion, that wicked spirits superior to men, viz. fallen angels did inflict diseases; but that those unclean spirits, by the evangelists called *dæmons*, were of this number. In other words, that many did use the term *daemon* then to denote a fallen angel. By consequence it was not exclusively used to express a departed human soul. (Lard. 1. 435.)

Lest the preceding remarks should appear, in any measure, obscure, I will again briefly state the great argument against possessions. Firstly, it is laid down, that *dæmons*, to whom the sacred writers attribute possessions, were generally understood before and after the time of Christ, to be heathen gods, or the souls of departed men:—It is then added, that the sacred writers, having given us no notice of using the term in a new or peculiar sense, did certainly employ it in reference to possessions, in the same sense, in which all other persons employed it. Therefore Christ and the evangelists could not design to assert, that the *dæmoni-acs* were under any supernatural influence, whatever. In opposition to this, I have endeavored to show, I. That the conclusion does by no means result from the premises: II. That the only legitimate inference is, that the New Testament writers design to attribute certain disorders to pagan gods or the souls of dead men. III. That as this conclusion, which unavoidably results from the premises, does, by concession of those, who use the argument, contain a falsehood, there must be falsehood in the premises: IV. That accordingly, by the same concessions, the term *dæmon*, does not always mean departed human souls, but sometimes evil spirits of a rank, superior to mankind, and it is allowed by Dr. Lardner, that among many, in our Saviour's time, it signified a fallen angel: and lastly, That the supposition, were it necessary to make it, that the sacred writers did use the term *dæmons* in a sense, somewhat peculiar, would not be incredible.

The truth is, that the terms, answering to *dæmon*, have great variety of meaning. They mean in general beings, superior to men. They may be supreme Gods, or subordinate gods; or, merely spirits, whether good or bad,—whether of human or divine origin. By Scapula we are told, that *dæmon* means god: and that it is often indiscriminately applied to any god, or goddess. He quotes from Plato, a sentence in which the Governor of the universe is called *δαίμων*.

πων μεγιστος. *Dæmon*, on some occasions, seems to be synonymous with genius, and may be either good or bad. As we say, that a man was led to such an action, either by his good genius, or by his bad genius. By the *dæmon* of Socrates is generally understood a guardian, or friendly spirit. Some philosophers, as has already been observed, taught, that *dæmons* were evil spirits of a rank superior to mankind. By others, human souls are called *dæmons*.—There is one term in popular use among ourselves, which I conceive, answers in general to the terms, which are used in Greek: I mean the word *spirits*. This word we apply to beings both good or bad: to God, to angels, to devils, and to the souls of dead men. The agreement between the words *δαίμονες*, in Greek, and *spirits* in English, will further appear, if we consider, that the *dæmons*, mentioned in the gospel are often denominated *unclean* or *evil spirits*.

Were it said in the gospel, merely, that certain persons had *dæmons*, we could not thence conclude, that they were under bad influence, any more, than if it were said, that these persons had spirits. The character of the *dæmons* is to be learnt from the effects, which they produced; the language, in which they spake; and the manner, in which our Saviour treated them.

It now appears, I hope, that on supposition, the possessions were real; and the persons *dæmonized* were under the influence of malignant spirits, there is nothing wonderful in the use, which our Saviour and the evangelists made of the corresponding Greek terms.

The opponents, indeed, of the common opinion often resort to this position. "Christ and the evangelists must have used language, as it is commonly understood, or as it was used by others;" but it is most certain, if their sentiments on the general subject, be just, that he did not use language in this way.

In common use, by their own concession, the word *δαμονιζομενος* then, expressed not only the disorder itself,



whether of body or mind ; but also the cause, whence it proceeded, namely, dæmons. But the New Testament writers, they tell us, mean to express by it, the disorder itself, but not the cause. When a Greek or a Jew said of any one, that he was a demoniac, he meant to assert two things, 1. That he was, in a particular manner, disordered, and, 2. That this disorder was produced by evil spirits. But the writers of the New Testament, according to the sentiments, which we oppose, when they used the like expression meant the former of these, but not the latter.

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## LECTURE XXVI.

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### *On Demoniacs.*

AN objection against the doctrine of real possessions, drawn from the use of the term *dæmon*, was noticed in my last lecture. This term, it was there shown, is very general, and corresponds, in a great degree, to the English word spirit. It does not designate the moral character of the being, to whom it is applied. It is used in relation to the Supreme God, by Plato and Isocrates. It was used by certain philosophers, and afterwards by some of the christian fathers, to signify evil spirits of a rank superior to mankind. It was likewise used, and I apprehend, very commonly, to signify the souls of dead men.

The evangelists did not apply the term either, in the first or last of these senses, but in the second. They did not assert that demoniacs were disordered by the Supreme Deity, or

by the spirits of the dead, but by spirits of a malignant character, and of a rank superior to men. The term is not used, therefore, in the New Testament in a sense unknown among the Greeks.

But, even if it never had been, by the Greeks, applied to any beings, but the Supreme God, or human ghosts, we could not infer, that the evangelists uniformly applied it to these objects. For they use the word *θεοι* to signify Jehovah, a being most strikingly different from the *δαίμονες* *πύγαι* and the deified heroes of antiquity, who were indiscriminately denominated *θεοι*.

I now proceed to notice a further objection: namely, that evil spirits seem never to have had such power, at any other period of the world, or at any other place, as the common opinion supposes them to have possessed in Judea, at the time of our Saviour.

This objection may be met, either by admitting or denying the fact.

I. Let the fact be conceded, that demoniacal possessions were seldom or never known, but in the land of Judea; and at the time, when Christ was engaged in his ministry on earth.

From the nature of the case, and from numerous express declarations in scripture, it is evident that there is perpetual hostility between the interest of Christ, and that of Satan. The nature of the case teaches this, because the grand object of the one is to promote order, virtue, and happiness; that of the other to promote confusion, vice and misery. The declarations of scripture, to which I refer, are these. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. (Gen. iii. 15.) For this purpose, was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (1. John iii. 8.) Again, I beheld satan, as lightning fall from heaven." This last is termed, by Bp. Warburton, "a strong and lively picture of the sudden precipitation of the prince of the air, from the place where he

had so long held his usurpation, hanging like a pestilential meteor over the sons of men." The empire of Christ, it is evident, is to be established on the ruins of that which the malignant spirit began, when our first parents were allured to rebel.

Now, when our Saviour came to open his dispensation of grace and purity,—when he came to "turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of satan to God;"—when the *minds* of men were to be redeemed from the slavery of prejudice and crimes, it was to have been supposed, that whatever power over the *bodies* of men, was permitted to satan, would be employed with peculiar assiduity and virulence; as it is said in the apocalypse, "The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath because he knoweth he hath but a short time." Nor is it improbable, that, to render the triumph of Christ the more signal and obvious, restraints on infernal malignity and power, a little previous to our Saviour's ministry, might have been, in some degree, diminished.

But, 2ndly. We are under no necessity of granting, that demoniacal possessions were confined to the time at which our Saviour appeared; or even that they were more frequent then, than previously.

The learned writer against the common opinion concerning demoniacs, not only acknowledges this, but takes much pains to prove it. With respect to demoniacs, says he, we meet with them in writings of the greatest antiquity, particularly in Æschylus, Sophocles and Eurypides. They occur also in the ancient historians, as well as in the writings of physicians. With respect to the philosophers, it is needless to appeal to the testimony of particular persons; for demonology composed a very eminent part of the Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy. That possessions were supposed common among the Jews, is evident from Josephus, who speaks of persons having lived many ages before his time, who were distinguished for their skill in exorcism. That possessions were not confined to *Judea*, is further evi-

dent from the Acts of the Apostles. The following occurrence happened at Ephesus, "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them, that had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus." The universality of demoniacal possessions appears from Plutarch, as quoted by MacKnight, in which a method of treating them, is mentioned, as practised by *most* nations.

Now, whether such methods of ejecting dæmons were whimsical or not, is perfectly immaterial to our present purpose, which is to show, that cases of supposed possession were not peculiar to the age and country of our Saviour.

It may, perhaps, be thought a very strong presumption against this, that we find nothing of this nature at the present day. If evil spirits had once both the disposition and the power to enter and molest human bodies, why, it may be asked, are no similar effects *now* produced? I answer, that our inability to account for such a fact, is no argument against it. We are unable to perceive, why some wicked men are permitted to accomplish their designs, while others are restrained. We are unable to show why the plot of Haman for burying in ruins all the captive Jews, was rendered abortive, while that of Herod for murdering the infants was suffered to take effect. We are unable to tell, why Paul was rescued from the forty conspirators, who had vowed his destruction, while, on Stephen they were permitted to satiate their malice.

But though our inability to account for a fact asserted, does by no means disprove the assertion; and there might be reasons, why demoniacal possessions should be suffered at one period and not at another, though such reasons were concealed from us, the remark may not be necessary on the present occasion. We are able to assign at least a probable reason for this difference. Since the coming of Christ, the power of satan over the human mind has unquestionably been restrained. The moral condition of those countries, in which pure christianity has been promulgated, is changed materially for the better. Now, why should not

this influence be restrained, as well in regard to the bodies, as the minds of men? And why should not the triumph of the Saviour be made apparent in both cases? If the common opinion be correct, it has been apparent in both.

A further objection to the doctrine of real possessions is this. St. Paul says, in the 8th chap. of 1. Corin. "we know, that an idol is nothing in the world;" and the same idea is evidently communicated in the 10th chapter; "What do I say then, that the idol is any thing? But this I say, that the things, which the Gentiles sacrifice, they do sacrifice unto dæmons, and not unto God." Now it is asserted that idols and dæmons are the same. If so, we have the declaration of St Paul, that dæmons are nothing in the world. Consequently, they could not have produced those effects on human bodies, which have been usually ascribed to them.

Without saying any thing as to the identity of idols and dæmons, in this place, which is however, not indisputable, I observe, that the objection proves too much for those, by whom it is offered. They believe that dæmons are the souls of dead men; and surely, St. Paul did not mean to teach the doctrine of annihilation, by saying that the souls of dead men are nothing, i. e. that the soul has no existence after death. By consequence, the expression must be understood with some limitation. When the Apostle asserted, that an idol is nothing in the world, if he used the word *εἰδωλον*, as synonymous with *δαμων*, he must have meant merely that an idol is no god, and as such is not to be regarded. That this is the meaning of the place, expositors seem generally agreed. It is thus expounded by Doddridge, Whitby, MacKnight and Piscater.

Again, the account, given of the damsel at Philippi, is supposed by some to militate with the common ideas of the dæmoniacal possession. The account is this: "It came to pass, that as we went to prayer, a certain damsel, possessed with a spirit of divination, met us. The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salva-

tion. Paul, being grieved, turned and said unto the spirit, I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her. And he came out the same hour." That which our translators call a spirit of divination, is in the original *πνευμα πυθωνος* spirit of Python. Now, Apollo, it is well known, has frequently the epithet *pythius*, and his priestess at Delphi was denominated Pythia. "It is here asserted then," saith the objector, "that the damsel had a pythonic spirit, or the spirit of Apollo. But who can believe that either the sacred writer, or St. Paul designed to assert any connexion, as subsisting between this disordered person and as heathen God? Therefore, the meaning must be, that the person in question was insane, and that her insanity was of such a kind, as was usually attributed to that prophetic spirit, which was supposed to actuate the priestess at Delphi;" and if so, the word *dæmonized* may be used with similar latitude.

Such is the objection, and I frankly acknowledge, that in my apprehension, it has more weight than any other, brought to oppose the common opinion. Still I conceive it is not insurmountable.

I concede at once, that the sacred writer did not mean to assert any connexion between the disordered person and a heathen god. I am willing to allow too, that merely the circumstance of her being said to have the *spirit of Python*, is not sufficient to prove her a demoniac. That she was such however, is shown by other circumstances. Paul commanded the spirit to come out of her, and it came out the same hour, at which time, her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone: that they should no longer be paid for her sooth-saying, i. e. foretelling future events; the power of doing which could not surely result from insanity, or from bodily distemper.

By the terms *spirit of Python*, the sacred writer means merely a prophesying spirit. Whatever reference the term once had to Apollo, by long use, this reference seems to have been lost. Accordingly Abp. Potter and Scapula, de-

fine *πυθων*, a prophesying daemon. From the former of these authors, I quote the following remarks. "As to the origin of this name, there are various conjectures: the most probable of which seems to be, that it was taken from Apollo Pythias, who was thought to preside over all sorts of divination, and afterwards appropriated by custom to this species: for so we find a great many words of general signification, in time made peculiar to some one part of what they signified before. To give one instance *τυραννος*, by the ancient Greeks, was applied to all kings, as well the just and merciful, as the cruel, and whom we now call tyrannical: but in more modern ages, was appropriated to the latter sort, and became a name of the greatest ignominy and detestation. On the contrary, words of a more narrow and limited sense, have sometimes passed their bounds, and taken upon them a more general and unconfined one: so *μαντεια*, which at first signified only that sort of prophesying, which was inspired with rage and fury, being derived *απο του μαινεσθαι*, from being mad, came at length to be a general name for all sorts of divination."

To those of you, who give most attention to this subject the following idea, perhaps, at this moment occurs; viz. that the word *δαμονιζομενος*, may have lost some part of its original import, as well as the phrase *εχειν πνευμα πωδωνος*. And why may we not suppose, that the evangelists had as little reference to any evil spirits, when they used the former, as the writer of the acts had to Apollo, when he used the latter?

This I conceive to be exhibiting the objection in the strongest possible light. To which my answer is this. I do not consider the doctrine of real possessions, as proved merely by the circumstance, that the persons in question are said to be *δαμονιζομενοι*, or to have *δαemons*; but chiefly by the manner, in which they are addressed by our Saviour, by their conduct, and by the remarks, which the evangelists make on the subject, all which will be more particularly considered hereafter.

At present I proceed to notice another objection, which is, that the common belief concerning demoniacs is attended with dangerous consequences. "Endless superstitions," says Mr. Farmer, "hath the doctrine of possessions generated among mankind." It is further asserted to be inconsistent with those ideas of divine government, which are clearly revealed in scripture, and even with the proof of revelation by miracles.

I. The doctrine is said to have produced endless superstitions.—That there have been many superstitions, which, without this doctrine, would not have existed, may be safely allowed. But the abuse of any assertion, or doctrine, does by no means prove its falsity. It is not easy to mention any doctrine, whether of natural or revealed religion, which has not been abused. I know not whether there would be any superstition, existing in the world, were there no belief in God, and a divine providence. But would this be a good argument in favor of atheism? Perhaps no law was ever enacted, which has not been abused. Perhaps no system of education was ever adopted, of which some persons have not made a bad use. As christianity itself is not, so neither is any particular view of christianity, answerable for those absurdities or crimes, which do not flow from it by legitimate consequence.

II. It is said, that the doctrine of possessions is inconsistent with those ideas of divine government, which are clearly revealed in scripture; in which ideas it is implied, that God is alone the Governor of the world; for the opinion in question, it is asserted, seems to allow the existence of other beings, able to oppose him, and disconcert his purposes.

I answer, that this objection can have no weight in application to any denomination of christians now in existence. Against the ancient Manicheans, who believed the eternity of an evil prince, it would have been forcible; because they supposed this evil being not completely under the control of the good being. But those who embrace the common opinion as to demoniacs, do not suppose that daemons are less under the divine control, or less dependent on God,



than wicked men. The latter habitually break the divine laws, oppose the benevolent purposes of God's government, and produce great disorder and misery on earth. Now, if this is not inconsistent with those ideas, which the scripture give us of the divine supremacy, neither is that doctrine, which attributes similar effects to spirits of a more elevated rank.

If the supremacy of God is not impaired, when a passionate man inflicts such a wound on his neighbor, as injures his health, or produces delirium, neither would it be impaired, if the same effects were produced by an invisible daemon.

Though the scriptures uniformly represent the Deity as presiding over the Universe, and every other creature as absolutely under his control, they are no less uniform in declaring, that the government which God maintains, is carried on through a great variety of means and subordinate agents. Angels are employed for purposes both of grace and severity. By an angel was David punished for numbering the people. By an angel was destroyed the vast Assyrian army. The angels of the Lord encamp about his saints. "They are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them, who shall be heirs of salvation." To promote the same general object, but in a capacity more humble and confined, he employs virtuous men. Men of a different character exist under his government, and are by no means inactive. Even them too, he often employs, in fulfilling the purposes of his infinite wisdom: not by impelling them to sin,—not by infusing into them evil desires; but by overruling, to the best purposes, those actions, which, without such impulse or infusion, they choose to perform.

Now, if there be vicious beings, of a rank, superior to men, it is strikingly analogous, that they too should be suffered to exhibit their characters, i. e. to perform vicious actions, and that these actions should be so restrained and overruled, as to advance those evil designs, which it was their tendency to impede, or render abortive.

But III. The doctrine of demoniacal possessions is said to be inconsistent with the proof of divine revelation, which arises from miracles. For if evil spirits can produce such effects, as this opinion ascribes to them, how can we be certain, that any system of religion is of divine origin, merely because it is accompanied by miracles.—To this I reply,

I. That from the perfections of God, and from facts, recorded in scripture, we may be confident, that no invisible agent will ever be permitted to exhibit such works in favor of falsehood, as are not accompanied with greater works in favor of the truth. We can by no means imagine, that God would remove restraints from invisible agents, with intention, that men should be deceived. If, therefore, visible effects are permitted, contrary to the established course of events, with design to confirm a lie, we may be confident, that greater effects will be produced, by which, such proof will be counteracted.—Accordingly we find, that when the magicians entered into contest with Moses, and either performed real miracles by infernal influence, or practised legerdemain with great dexterity, he, by the finger of God, was enabled to cover with shame, those, who instituted the competition.

II. There is another criterion of very great value; I mean the moral tendency of those doctrines, in favor of which the miracles are wrought. No external evidence would be sufficient to convince us of the divine origin of a system, enjoining, or decidedly allowing immorality.

But the objection, which we are now considering, whether brought against revelation, or against that particular tenet, which implies the influence of demons, is, I apprehend of very little practical importance. For, there is not probably a person on earth, tolerably enlightened, who would reject christianity, if once convinced, that those miracles, recorded in the Gospel, were in fact wrought. Persons may pretend to disbelieve, and some do disbelieve, that the miracles attributed to Christ, were ever wrought; but for many centuries, no infidel, after acknowledging these, has

rejected the Gospel. Such an absurdity, after all the proof, which has been given of the benign influence, which christianity has on the human character, will, it is probable, never again be witnessed.

But suppose you were to meet a person, of so extraordinary a cast of mind, as to allow the truth of evangelical history, so far as it relates to the expulsion of dæmons by our Saviour, and yet professed himself wholly uncertain, as to the moral character of Christ, and whether his miraculous powers were derived from above or beneath. Concerning the moral character of possessing dæmons, he could have no doubt. Their malignity was rendered sufficiently plain, by the sufferings, which they occasioned, and by the torments, which, they acknowledged, were in reserve for them. The interest of Christ, it is evident, was opposite to theirs. To those, whom they afflicted, he restored sanity, both of body and intellects. Our Saviour himself showed the absurdity, as well as impiety, of the opinion, that he cast out dæmons by infernal influence. "If satan cast out satan, he is divided against himself: how then shall his kingdom stand?" With such an objector, as we have supposed, you have nothing further to do, than to ask, whether it be a matter of uncertainty, that the opposite of darkness is light; and the opposite of malignity, is benevolence? Whether a person in league with the powers of darkness, would have done more towards enlightening this world, not only than any individual, whether prince or philosopher, but incomparably more, than all uninspired men of every age? Whether a person, whose character was that of consummate falsehood, deceit, and impiety, as the character of Jesus must have been, if he wrought miracles by infernal power, would have set himself, *summis viribus*, against every vice, every prejudice, and corrupt propensity: and, while he exhibited, in his own life, unparalleled and untarnished purity, he would have communicated to the world, a system of religion, which was never embraced by a nation, a community, or an individual, without produ-

cing an extraordinary measure of happiness and virtue; a religion, whose votaries are the excellent of the earth, just in proportion, as they honor its author and conform to his precepts?

But you will never, I am confident, have occasion to resort to this reasoning. You will never meet a person, who, after being convinced, that Christ wrought the miracles, which are attributed to him, will deny the truth and divinity of the Gospel. Whenever he acknowledges, that Jesus did eject dæmons, no doubts will be pretended, whether it were done by Beelzebub, or by the finger of God.

Now if a vast majority of christians, far from being stumbled at the doctrine of dæmoniacal possessions, believe christianity the more firmly on account of that power, which Christ displayed in counteracting them: and if infidels do never reason in the manner, which the objector supposes, and if they did, could be answered with perfect facility, how little ground does this objection afford for discarding the opinion, usually received?

## LECTURE XXVII

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### *On Demoniacs.*

It is my present object to consider some of those passages in the New Testament, which relate to dæmoniacal possessions; that we may the better judge, whether they can be reconciled with the opinion, that nothing more is meant, than bodily distempers.

In giving an account of our Saviour's preparing his twelve apostles, for their ministry, St. Mark uses the following language, "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out dæmons."

Here, you perceive, that the ejection of dæmons is clearly distinguished from the cure of diseases. Now, if dæmonized persons were merely under the influence of natural disorders, why should the sacred historian make this distinction? On this supposition, it is very evident, that the latter clause conveys no new idea at all: it only reiterates part of what had just been asserted. Say, if you please, that dæmonized persons had a particular kind of disorder. Be it so. The language will, however, be precisely similar to this, "He sent them forth to cure sicknesses, and to cure fevers." What conceivable need is there for adding the latter clause?

In the Gospel of St. Luke, we find observed the same distinction between those, who were dæmonized and those who were sick; for he speaks of "certain women, who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities:" and when the twelve disciples were actually sent forth, their commission was couched in similar language; "Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all dæmons and to cure diseases." Further, Jesus said in relation to Herod, "Go and tell that fox, Behold I cast out dæmons, and do cures."

Now, let it be considered, that whatever be the truth, as to dæmoniacal possessions, the Jews, in our Saviour's time, did believe in them. And is it not extremely evident, that the language, which our Saviour used, was calculated to confirm them in their opinion? The sentiment if true, is an error of no inconsiderable magnitude. According to the ideas of our opponents, it is an error of great magnitude. It has filled the world, they tell us, with various kinds of superstition. It is inconsistent with scriptural ideas of divine Supremacy, and even with that proof of revelation, which arises from miracles. But if this be true, our Saviour must have known it, as well as the gentlemen, who make these remarks. Is it not then surprising, that he said nothing to correct the error? But he did more, than barely to leave them in quiet possession of the opinion: he did much, it would seem, to establish it. This will further appear from other passages. The following account is given us by St. Luke. "When he came forth to land, there met him out of the city a man, which had dæmons a long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs, when he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, what I have to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God, most high? I beseech thee, torment me not. For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For often times it had caught him; and he was kept bound with chains, and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the dæmon into

the wilderness. And Jesus asked of the dæmon, What is thy name? And he said Legion, because many dæmons had entered into him. And they besought him, that he would not command them to go out into the deep. And there was an herd of many swine, feeding on the mountain. And they besought him, that he would suffer them to enter into them: and he suffered them. Then went the dæmons out of the man and entered into the swine. And the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choaked." Here, you will observe, the dæmon is represented, as speaking repeatedly, and as offering a request. If the dæmoniac were under the influence merely of a bodily distemper, what was it, which asked permission to enter the swine? Was it the distemper? The very idea is absurd. Was it the man himself? "Yes, replies an opponent, he fancied himself possessed by an evil spirit. and believed that the spirit, through the medium of his organs, made this request." There would be plausibility in this reply, but for the two following considerations; 1. If such were the fancy of the insane person, why should our Saviour, who came to diffuse truth, and not to establish errors, use such language, as was obviously calculated to leave this impression on all present, that dæmons were concerned in the case? That his words are thus calculated I need not assert, after having read them.

II. The request was granted. "Then went the dæmons out of the man, and entered into the swine." Surely this was not the dæmoniac; for he, at this time, was cured. Yet, whatever it was, it was the same, which asked the liberty. It was therefore, neither the man, nor the distemper. The inference seems undeniable. I therefore repeat the question, which has been proposed. Why did our Saviour and the evangelists, use such language, as tended to confirm a popular error, especially if, as many assert, the error tends to produce extensive mischief? Or rather, can it be supposed that they did so?

To this inquiry the opponents of the doctrine under ex-

amination reply, "That it is no unusual thing for all sorts of persons, and particularly with the divinely commissioned instructors of mankind, to adopt the popular language, without designing to co-intenance, the opinion, on which the language was originally founded." In proof of this, they tell us that the sacred writers speaking of the rising and setting of the sun, though the succession of a day and night is well known to proceed not from the revolution of the sun, but of the earth.

In answer to this I observe, that there are three cases, in which popular language, founded on false opinion, may be adopted. 1. When it is difficult to change the popular phraseology, and when the error, on which it is founded, is of no importance. This applies to passages of scripture, in which the sun is said to rise and set, and to rejoice in running his race. It is so difficult to alter this phraseology, that philosophers have not attempted it. They speak of the sun passing through the Zodiac, and of the sun's rising and setting, with as much constancy, as the common people. The error so far as morality or religion is concerned, is perfectly innocent. The system of Copernicus has done nothing towards rendering the obligations of virtue, either stronger or weaker.

II. Popular language, though founded in error, may be used, when its original import is no longer restrained; as a vile person may be termed a villain, though we have no reference to the tenure of land; and a person of vivacity may be called sprightly, though we have no belief in the existence of sprights. For this reason as we have endeavored to show, the writer of the Acts was justified in saying of the damsel at Phillippi, that she had *πνευμα πύθωνος*, though he had no belief, that she was inspired by Appolo. The phrase, we believe, had lost its primitive reference, and expressed nothing more, than the term, prophesying spirit.

But, 3. The case is widely different, when popular language is used under such circumstances, as render it probable, and almost certain, that persons, who hear, will be con-



firmly in dangerous errors. Now, the belief of dæmoniacal possessions, is by those, who reject it, considered an error of great magnitude, and of a tendency, extremely mischievous. Why then, I repeat it, if our Saviour and the evangelists were of the same opinion, did they use such language, as tended directly to establish the error?

The answer, which has been given, you perceive is by no means satisfactory, because the two cases compared are so extremely different.

Nor does it appear, that our Lord and the evangelists were under any necessity of using the popular language, that conveyed a wrong idea. It was as easy to say of persons, that they were insane or disordered, as to say, that they were dæmonized. When Christ commissioned his apostles, if he designed to give them authority to cure diseases only, it was perfectly easy to stop at that sentence, which imparted this power. It is not conceivable on this ground, that the mention of demons was necessary. If they had received authority to cure diseases in general, it is incredible, that they should have scrupled, in relation to any particular disease, whether it came within their commission.

If, therefore, dæmoniacal possessions were only a species of disorder, it seems to have been wholly unnecessary to mention it distinctly. On a certain occasion, there came to Christ a man kneeling down, and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is lunatic, and sore vexed." St. Matthew goes on to say, in a following verse, that the dæmon departed out of him. Now, as the father was contented to call his son a lunatic, it cannot be pretended, I think, that the evangelist was under any necessity of calling him a dæmoniac. And that he did so, clearly proves, that in his opinion the latter term was better of the two; i. e. that a dæmon was concerned in producing the disorder.

A similar observation may be made in regard to many other passages. For instance, had it been difficult for the sacred writers to avoid the popular appellation, when speaking of persons, having that particular species of disorder,

called possession; yet surely it was not necessary to assert, that the dæmons spake, that they exhibited fears of being tormented, and that they asked permission to pass from one animal body into another.

With design to remove the difficulty, which we are now considering, it has been said, that Christ and his apostles received no commission to instruct men in the nature of diseases. They found men under the influence of various disorders, either of body or mind. Some of these disorders were attributed to evil spirits. Whether the disorders did thus originate, or not, was a question which neither Christ nor his apostles were commissioned to determine.

I answer, that our only way of knowing, what Christ was commissioned to teach, is to consider what he did in fact teach. If then Christ did not teach any thing, as to the cause of those disorders, denominated possessions, it is indeed certain, that he had no commission to do it. But that you perceive is the very point at issue. The respondent, then, endeavors to remove an objection, by assuming the truth of that, against which the objection is made.

Besides, I have endeavored to show, that our Saviour and the evangelists used such language, as was calculated, if the doctrine of dæmoniacal possession be false, to confirm the Jews, in an important error. Is it a sufficient answer to say, that they were not commissioned to do otherwise? Is a special commission requisite to authorize men not to use, such language, as can hardly fail of confirming or producing false opinions? I should apprehend, that whatever scruples were entertained in the case, would be against the use, and not against the omission of such language.

As a further proof of the common opinion, we may mention those passages in sacred history, which assert, that the dæmons knew Christ. Luke iv. 34. "And in the synagogue, there was a man, who had a spirit of an unclean dæmon, and cried out with a loud voice, saying, let us alone. What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth."—Mark 1. 34. "And he healed many, that were sick

of diverse diseases, and cast out many dæmons; and suffered not the dæmons to speak because they knew him." Now, what reason can be imagined, why persons, under the influence of natural insanity, should have more knowledge of Christ, than others, in quiet exercise of their rational powers?

I ask your attention to the following passage in the evangelical history. When Jesus had rebuked the evil spirit, who had uttered his name, it is said, that "he came out of him, and hurt him not." How extraordinary is this remark, if nothing is here meant, but a natural disorder! Does it usually hurt men to be free from diseases? Is it strange, that a man should be no worse for being restored to health? Is it probable, that a writer, under the influence of inspiration or of common sense, should suppose, that any reader stood in need of such information? But, if we adopt the common opinion, as to possessions, this is perfectly intelligible. For, on another occasion, when our Lord had commanded a dumb and deaf spirit to come out of an afflicted person, "the spirit cried and rent him sore, and came out of him; and he was as one dead, insomuch, that many said, he is dead." Now, if evil spirits, on leaving the bodies of those, whom they had afflicted, sometimes exercised their malignity in augmenting the sufferer's pains, it was perfectly natural, that the evangelist should notice an instance, in which nothing of this was suffered to take place.

But the passage is much to our purpose, if viewed in another light. It is said, that the "spirit cried out, and rent him sore, and came out of him." If the term *spirit* is not here to be taken literally, it must mean either the disorder or the man himself. But taking either of these, as the meaning, there will be no sense in the passage. In one case it will be, the disease cried out; in the other, the man came out of himself!

Again, the words of our Saviour to his apostles, when returned from their mission, well deserve our notice. "And the seventy returned with joy saying, Lord, even the dæ-

mons are subject to us, through thy name. And he said, I beheld satan as lightning fall from heaven." This answer of our Saviour, taken in connexion with the address of the disciples, seems clearly to suggest this idea, that there is an important relation between the cure of demoniacs and the falling of satan; that the former implied the diminution of infernal influence.

I have now laid before you the most obvious arguments in favor of the doctrine of demoniacal possessions; together with most of the objections, which are made to it. There is one, however, which has been intentionally reserved for this place.

The common opinion, it is said, has an ill influence on the success of christianity, which may, in some instances, be disbelieved on this account.

I answer, that if the opinion is not supported by scripture, it is doubtless to be rejected. If it is thus supported, we have no right to expunge or conceal it, for the purpose of conciliating infidels or sceptics. Those, who reject christianity, must abide the result. That the doctrine contains nothing abhorrent from reason, and nothing of course, which ought to produce scepticism as to christianity, I endeavored to show in the first lecture. To reduce christianity to the taste of mankind, has often been assayed; but with too little success to encourage a repetition of the experiment.

The present attempt, I apprehend, however, is really calculated to produce that scepticism, which it aims at preventing.

Suppose, for instance, you meet a deist, who informs you, that one important reason, why he disbelieves the gospel, is, the extraordinary accounts, there given of the influence of dæmons on human bodies. You offer to remove the difficulty, by telling him, that you believe as little of that as he does; informing him, at the same time, that, though much is said of dæmons in the New Testament, our Lord and the evangelists, prudently accommodating them-

selves to the prejudices, which then prevailed, meant nothing more than natural disorders. He refers you to particular places, showing, that these dæmons are treated, as living agents,—that they are said to speak, to tell who Jesus was, to ask permission to go from one animal body into another, and to speak of a time, when they shall be tormented. You acknowledge, that all this is true; but endeavor to convince him, that it implies nothing inconsistent with the most perfect integrity and virtue. Of this, I think, you would not easily convince him. But, if you should, and he should feel himself pressed with those abundant and various proofs, which support the gospel, he would find much relief in the very idea, which you had conveyed; he would say, If the New Testament writers use language with such extraordinary freedom,—if they make such amazing concessions to the prejudices and errors of men, no person can have any distinct view of what was in fact their meaning;—no one can be certain, when they relate things, as they were in truth, and when they relate them, as they appeared to vulgar and prejudiced minds.—Such would unquestionably be the success of your experiment.

I am far from asserting, that christianity could not be proved, if the opinion in question were assented to. Its evidences are so numerous, strong and various, that if something were taken away, there would still be enough to ensure assent from the upright and impartial. But it cannot be denied, that the opinion, under consideration, if proved, (as it never can be,) would envelop revealed religion in so dense a mist, as to take much from that distinctness, with which its various objects are otherwise viewed. Nor have I any doubt, that the number of infidels and indifferent believers would be rendered somewhat greater, than it is at present.

The lecture will be closed with some remarks of a practical nature.

I. It ought to excite our gratitude, that all vicious and malignant spirits are under the control of a benevolent, wise, and powerful being.

The state of human society would be most unhappy, were no restraints imposed on the passions of men. Even now, deeds of the greatest brutality, malice, and ferocity are sometimes witnessed. Yet, the restraints, imposed by morality and civil government, are almost without number. What then would be the condition of man, if these were universally removed! Hence we learn to appreciate the blessings of good government. But, those spirits, whose existence the scriptures so clearly assert, are superior to man. They far exceed him, both in power and malignity; and, but for the gracious and unremitting providence of God, would render this earth a scene of universal and indescribable desolation and horror.

II. Though we have no evidence, that natural evils are now produced by the agency of malignant spirits, we are told, that the minds of men are yet subject to the corrupting influence of that being, whom the inspired writers denominate *the god of this world*. Our Saviour directed his disciples to pray, *Lead us not into temptation*: and, considering the mention, which he frequently made of this designing and malevolent being, it cannot be doubted, that his devices constitute a great part of that temptation, against which we are to pray for security. St. Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, had no idea, that the danger, hence resulting, was imaginary. "Be sober; be vigilant; for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour."

It becomes us, then, to maintain sobriety and caution, and to cultivate a sense of our dependence on him, whose attributes are engaged for the salvation of all, who obey him.

III. Though our present connexion with incorporeal spirits is neither visible nor intimate, it will in both these respects be different in a future life. The two great communities, which constitute God's moral kingdom, will then be clearly distinguished. Similar characters, to whatever order of beings they once belonged, will then be united. Virtuous men will resemble angels, and be united with them.

“When they shall arise from the dead,” saith our Saviour, “they shall be as the angels, which are in heaven.” Lazarus, we are told, “was carried by angels, into Abraham’s bosom.” The author of the epistle to the Hebrews uses the following very animating language, “Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant.”

Between bad men and evil spirits the connexion will be no less intimate. There is, at present, a similarity of character. Both violate the divine law, and contemn the divine government: though the latter do it with more constancy and daring, than the former. To the Jews our Saviour said, “Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.” Of the place, prepared for the reception and punishment of rebellious spirits, they will not be the sole occupants. Thither, has our Saviour informed us, all impenitent human beings will be commanded to depart. We are now preparing to associate with one of these great divisions. Every vicious habit, every vicious action or thought, tends to assimilate us to the great community of reprobate spirits: Every habit and every action, implying real virtue, tends to prepare us for the most honorable communion and intercourse with angels. If then you have ambition, christianity proposes to you an object most worthy of it. If you desire glory, it offers you glory, honor, and immortality. If you aspire, let it be to nothing less, than to celestial thrones:—to a participation among them, for whom a kingdom was prepared before the foundation of the world.

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# SERMON I.

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## IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

—ooo—

2 TIMOTHY, i. 10.

*Who hath—brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.*

THE person, to whom the aspired writer ascribes this achievement, is Jesus Christ.

No person, acting agreeably to his rational nature, can habitually fix his attention exclusively on the present time. As the present is connected with the past; and as various portions of the past were connected with each other; it is scarcely possible to believe, that future events should have no connexion with those which are now passing. Hence there is no question, in the solution of which mortals can be more deeply interested, than this, “If a man die, shall he live again.”

On this subject no doubts can remain to those who are initiated in the school of Christ. Among the numerous sects, into which the professed friends of christianity are divided, I recollect none, which denies the soul's immortality :—none, which doubts, that eternal life is offered to men, and will by all the truly penitent be obtained and enjoyed. All uncertainty on this point is precluded, not only by the general constitution of the gospel, but by express declara-

tions conceived in language, strong and unequivocal. "The hour cometh when they, who are in their graves, shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth: they who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they, who have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation."

Thus hath our Saviour, in his gospel, illuminated, or, to use the translation of Dr. MacKnight, rendered clear the doctrine of immortality. By the doctrine of immortality, I do not mean merely the existence of the soul after the death of the body; but a state, in which happiness or misery will correspond with previous character.

That we may duly appreciate the christian religion, considered in this point of view, it will be necessary to show, by a plain statement of facts, how much this doctrine of immortality needed illumination. To this subject I respectfully solicit your attention.

For the sake of perspicuity it may be convenient to inquire,

I. What might, without revelation, be *rationaly concluded* as to the doctrine of a moral retribution, and

II. What was *actually* believed on this subject.

I. What might without revelation, be *rationaly considered* as to the doctrine of a moral retribution.

Bishop Butler has shown, that a strong presumption in favour of a future state, arises from the present existence of man.

Whether it is an original principle of our nature, or not, we can scarcely avoid expecting a repetition of those events, which have been uniformly witnessed, and the permanence of those objects, which are known to exist. Having observed, that there is always rapid vegetation, when the air is warm and the ground moist, we confidently believe, that these facts will be connected in future. If a particular kind of air has been known to destroy animal life in a thousand instances, it is inferred, that the next animal, that inhales it, will die.

This kind of reasoning is thought to be equally strong, perhaps even more so, when applied to the permanence of

objects. If there has been, for a long time, a river, or cavern, or mountain, in such a place, we have no more to doubt of its present existence there, than if our eyes were now fixed upon it. There is always a very strong presumption, that objects and effects will remain as they have been, unless there is evidence to prove the contrary. On this principle is transacted almost all the business of life. The husbandman puts his seed into the ground, not because he knows it will germinate; but because he presumes it from the uniformity, with which the latter event has succeeded the former. The merchant sends his property to the West Indies, not because he knows, that those islands now exist, but because he knows, that they have existed, and he has no evidence of their submersion.

On similar ground, our present existence as intelligent agents affords a presumption, that we shall exist hereafter; and this presumption will be strong until we have some evidence to the contrary. Death does not afford this evidence; for though we have witnessed the destruction of human bodies, no one has witnessed the dissolution of the soul. Nor can such dissolution be inferred from the ruins, to which the body is reduced. For the limbs may be amputated, and the flesh wasted by sickness, while the living agent, the rational being remains in full vigor. Immediately before a death, produced by sickness, persons have sometimes as quick a perception, as clear discernment, and as strong a memory, as in the season of perfect health. Yet is it very probable, that the alteration to be effected by the remaining efforts of death, is not greater, perhaps not nearly as great, as that which has already been effected. And, if all, which the body has already endured, has not injured the soul, or the rational being, it can neither be concluded, nor fairly presumed, that this same rational being will be annihilated by the short sufferings, which still remain.

There arises, therefore, from our present existence, no inconsiderable presumption, that we shall exist hereafter.

And further, as there is in the nature of virtue a superior

ity over vice;—as it imparts to its possessor a self approbation and tranquility, which vice cannot impart;—as it procures, in a greater or less degree, esteem and respect from men, which vice, as such, cannot procure; and as in consequence of this esteem, the virtuous man, other things being equal, is more readily assisted, and in general better treated, than the vicious:—a probability hence arises, that such will be the state of things, through whatever stages of existence we may pass hereafter.—Nay, further, as those circumstances, which, at present, prevent virtue from obtaining a complete triumph, and vice from being put to confusion, are not necessary, but wholly adventitious,—and as the tendencies of virtue and vice are opposite, and eternally must be, there is reason to hope, that in a future state the superiority of the one to the other, will be more decided and obvious.

In proceeding thus far, the divine moral attributes have not been taken into view. When these are satisfactorily proved, the argument in favor of a future state becomes more powerful. As God is morally pure, whenever he sees virtue, he must approve it; and vice, for the same reason, must excite his displeasure and disgust. It cannot be conceived, that any good being, whether human or divine, should view with indifference, opposite moral qualities. Now, if God looks on virtue with approbation, and on vice with hatred and disgust, can it be doubted, that this hatred or approbation will, in some way, be rendered manifest? Were a parent to make no discrimination between his obedient and disobedient children; bestowing the same favors, praise, and caresses, on the one, as on the other, his own moral character could not be maintained. No person, I am persuaded, can entertain honorable views of God, without believing, that in some period of human existence, a difference will be made between the precious and the vile. As there is, in the present state, no perfect discrimination of this kind; and as, notwithstanding the opposite tendencies of virtue and vice, there are ten thousand instances, in which

the latter triumphs over the former, reason seems to impel us to believe in a future state, in which present disorders will be rectified, and when that retribution, which is now incipient and extremely imperfect, will be consummated.

But though this reasoning appears conclusive in proof of a future state, in which there shall be a perfect discrimination of characters, it does not so clearly prove, that happiness will be the lot of any.

To any person who makes use of his reason, and entertains correct views of the divine character, it must be apparent, that the world is in a state of moral pollution. If the divine law is just, every violation of it deserves punishment. The most reflecting persons would therefore have very uncomfortable apprehensions as to their future destiny. (Butler's Analogy, Part ii. ch. v. §3.)

I do not deny, that in the creation and government of God, there are proofs of *mercy* as well as of *goodness*, and that therefore the friends of virtue, if such should be found, would have reason to *hope*, that their sins would be pardoned on condition of repentance, and their upright services accepted and rewarded. Yet nothing like certainty could be obtained. These friends of virtue would know that their virtues were imperfect, and their offences innumerable. These offences, while not pardoned, must prevent reward, and render the person obnoxious to punishment. But should he be satisfied of this general truth, that Deity is not inexorable, but that pardon is, on certain conditions, attainable, it would still be perfectly beyond his power precisely to ascertain those conditions. Were he sure, that the terms were repentance, he would still have reason to inquire, whether this would be effectual in regard to *all* sins, even those which had been of a peculiarly deep stain, or had been long continued; and further, whether those sins, which were subsequent to repentance, would come within the limits of mercy. Neither could it be ascertained, whether future happiness would be temporary or eternal.

• If pagan philosophers had reasoned, on the subject of

moral retribution, as forcibly, as the ablest among the moderns, such as Clark and Butler, their conclusions would still have been too indefinite to give satisfaction even to themselves; and how far removed their arguments would be from the understanding of common people, who have neither capacities nor leisure for such speculations, but who are, however, as much interested in a future state as any on earth, is too evident to require proof.

It appears then, that had the powers of the human mind been well employed on the subject, there would still have been great need, that the doctrine of life and immortality should be divinely illuminated.

II. But there is a vast difference between the possible and the actual discoveries of human reason: which leads us to inquire, in the *second* place, as to those sentiments, which prevailed on the subject of a future state of moral retribution. That existence is not terminated by death, but that the soul survives the body, appears to have been a sentiment, extensively diffused and *generally* admitted among pagan nations. This remark is applicable not less to heathen of modern, than of ancient times. Why then, it may be asked, was it necessary that the doctrine of immortality should receive additional light by Jesus Christ in the Gospel? I answer,

For three reasons;

1. Though the doctrine of a future state was general among the ancient heathen, it was by no means universal. Socrates is represented in the *Phedon* of Plato, as saying, "Almost every body fancies, that when the soul parts from the body, it is no more; it dies along with it. In the very minute of parting, it vanishes like a vapour of smoke, which flies off, and disperses, and has no existence." (Plato's *Phedon*. p 100.) This testimony is more important, as it is contained in a work designed expressly to prove the opposite doctrine.

Polybius complains of the general profligacy and want of integrity, which, in his day, prevailed among the Greeks,

and attributes it to the national rulers, who had encouraged the multitude to despise the terrors of a future state.

It will not, I hope, be thought improper to introduce the following passage from Roman history, although it may have been repeatedly brought forward for a similar purpose.

In the speech, which Cæsar delivered to a full Senate on occasion of Cataline's conspiracy, he endeavours to dissuade them from passing a sentence of death on the conspirators, by this argument, that death would be no punishment, as they, who were in favor of that sentence, intended it should be; assigning for a reason, that after death, there is neither enjoyment nor suffering; but that death is to all mortals, the end of evils.\*

We cannot doubt, that he well understood the character of those to whom he was speaking. But if we had any doubts of this, they would be removed, by observing, that this open avowal of infidelity, did not occasion the least surprise; those who replied, made no remarks, as that it were a novelty. Cicero answered coolly, that their ancestors had supposed it necessary to the public good, that the vicious should be deterred from crimes, by the fear of something after death.† The same illustrious author informs us in another place, how generally the ancient belief as to infernal regions of reward and punishment, was, in his time, discarded.‡

The contempt, in which this doctrine was held even by the vulgar in the days of Juvenal, is strongly represented in his second satire.

"Esse aliquos manes, et subterranea regna,  
Et centum, et Stygio ranas in gurgite nigras,  
Atque una transire vadum tot millia cymba,  
Nec pueri credunt, nisi qui nondum sere levantur."

\* Eam cuncta mortalium mala dissolvere: ultra neque cura, neque gaudio locum esse. Sallust Cat. § 1.

† Apud inferos ejusmodi quedam illi antiqui supplicia impiis constituta esse voluerunt. 4 Orat. in Catalinam. See Timæus, in life of Homer, 220.

‡ Que unus tam excors inveniri potest, quam illa, quæ quondam credebantur, apud inferos portenta extimescat? Cic. de-nat. deor. L. ii. c. 2. Tuscul. L. i. 15.

"That angry justice formed a dreadful hell,  
 That ghosts in subterranean regions dwell,  
 That hateful Styx his muddy current rolls,  
 And Charon ferries o'er unbodied souls,  
 Are now as tales, or idle fables prized,  
 By children question'd, and by men despised." *Gifford.*

It may be thought, that the sentiment, here conveyed, is contradicted by the same author, in his 13th satire, which portrays, in very lively colours, the terrors of a guilty conscience, and represents the wicked as fearing punishment from an avenging hand.

To this I reply, that those fears relate to this life, and are in no degree founded on an expectation of punishment beyond the grave. The guilty person turns pale, when it thunders, and trembles at the tempest, not because he expects a future life, but fears, that offendend Jove will terminate the present.

The truth of these remarks will be more apparent by examining the story of the dishonest Spartan, mentioned in this 13th satire; so likewise in the fable by Prodicus, concerning Virtue and Pleasure, transmitted by Xenophon, the rewards of virtue are fame on earth, but nothing in heaven. (p. 316.)

That there was prevailing at Athens, at the time of the great plague, little or no belief in a future moral retribution, appears from facts, stated by Thucydides in his account of that calamity. As the danger of death increased, crimes were augmented. "Every one was now more easily induced to do that, which for decency's sake they did only covertly before. They saw the strange mutability of outward condition, so that they thought it prudent to catch hold of speedy enjoyments and quick gusts of pleasure, persuaded, that their bodies and their wealth might be their own merely for a day. Reverence for the gods, or for the laws of society, laid no restraints upon them, either judging, that piety, or impiety, were things indifferent, since they saw, that all men perished alike; or throwing away every apprehension of being called to an account for their enor-



mities, since justice might be prevented by death ; or rather, as the heavier judgment, to which man could be doomed, was already hanging over their heads, snatching this interval of pleasure before it fell."

Proof to the same purpose might be considerably multiplied ; but these are sufficient, it is believed, to show, that at the times, to which they relate, the doctrine of a future state, was by no means universal either in Greece or Rome.

Nor, should we direct our attention to the modern pagans, would the case appear different.

Of the inhabitants of the Andaman Islands, Col. Symes observes, "It is not known, that they have any idea of a future state;" though he subjoins, "This may possibly arise from our imperfect means of discovering their opinions."

On the mountains, which separate Arracan from Ava, the same author found a harmless, untaught race of men, from the name of their country called *Kayners*. This people have no idea of a place of future reward and punishment.

The inhabitants of the Pogy Islands, lying off Sumatra, as we are informed by the Asiatic Researches, "do not appear to have the most distant idea of a future state of rewards and punishment." Mr. Campbell, who recently travelled in the southern parts of Africa, found tribes of the natives, who believe the soul and body perish at the same time. The same sentiment appears to prevail among the inhabitants of the country, contiguous to Nootka Sound.

2. Though notwithstanding these exceptions, there has generally prevailed among the heathen, both of ancient and modern times, some belief, that death does not terminate human existence, the doctrine of immortality seems never to have been established among them, on any rational grounds. It was probably first communicated to men by revelation, and cherished by the magistrate, as an important auxiliary to civil government. But it was not received, either as the result of revelation, or reason, but of ancient tradition, the origin of which was unknown.

3. Another most important reason, why the doctrine of

immortality needed illumination, was, that the ideas of those who believed it, were irrational, ill defined, or inconsistent with a moral retribution.

There appears to be no other way of ascertaining what ideas as to a future state, prevailed among the pagan vulgar, than by attending to what the poets have left us on this subject. "We cannot," says the learned author of the Intellectual System, "make a better judgment concerning the generality and bulk of the ancient pagans, than from the poets and mythologists, who were the chief instructors of them." Their writings were considered among the Greeks, as being in no very inferior sense, the result of inspiration. If such were their regard for the poets in general, what must have been their veneration for Homer, whose verses, to use the language of an animated writer, resounded through all Greece; and whose superiority was so universally acknowledged, that no one was more jealous of *his* pre-eminence, than of the sun by which the world is enlightened. This poet has described the region of departed souls. Is the description such as reason approves? Is it such as to supersede all necessity of light from heaven?

What can be more absurd, than that vast crowds of unbodied spirits should rush around the sacrifice, which Ulysses had offered, eager to taste the blood, which was flowing from it? What, indeed, can be more full of gloom, and darkness, and horror, than the whole scene, which the poet describes? In his subterranean world, we look in vain for any blissful regions: we see no calm and joyous retreats, where virtuous souls receive divine light, and contemplate the purity and wisdom of God. Those, who, in heathen estimation, had been fairest candidates for celestial glory, were found, even in this state of retribution, agitated with all the fury of mortal passions; sullen and gloomy in their confinement, dissatisfied with the change, through which they had passed. Achilles, though elevated far above vulgar shades, indignantly exclaims,

Think not death a theme  
Of consolation ; I had rather live,  
The servile hind for hire, and eat the bread  
Of some man, scantily himself sustain'd,  
Than sovereign empire hold o'er all the shades.—*Cowper.*

If in describing the same general objects, the Roman poet has not overspread the whole with equal gloom and horror ; if he has assigned to virtuous souls spacious fields, lucid and tranquil skies ; to say nothing of the dog, the barge, and the infernal river, how far beneath the desires of immortal souls are the leisure, the conflicts, and pastimes of the Elysian fields ! It has almost the appearance of profaneness, to compare these with the christian paradise. Did not the subject require it, I should need an apology perhaps for introducing in such a connexion, the account, which writers, truly inspired, have given us of the condition and employment of saints in light. “Ye are come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.”

To those, who are inclined to think, that the poetical account of the infernal kingdom is too grossly absurd to have been credited even by the vulgar, it may be sufficient to answer, that Plato represents even Socrates, as discoursing in the most solemn hours of his life, i. e. just before his execution, concerning the state of departed souls, in a way, which is but little different from the description of poets. He speaks particularly of the *Acherusian Lake*, the barges, *Cocytus*, and *Phlegethon* : adding, “No man of sense can pretend to assure you, that all these things are just as you have heard. But all thinking men will be positive, that the state of the soul, and the place of its abode after death, is absolutely such as I represent it, or at least very near it, provided the soul be immortal.” (See *Phaedon* 172.)

Another reason why the ancient heathen needed additional light on the subject of immortality, comprehending a retribution, is, that from the nature of their religion, they had no correct standard of moral virtue. In proportion as they believed the current theology concerning a future state, they must have believed the common fables as to the character of their deities ; as to their origin, passions, disappointments, amours and contentions. How could they consistently expect reward from the gods, for moral qualities, which the latter did not possess ; or punishment for vices, which were as common in heaven, as they were upon earth ?

Those among the modern pagans, who believe in the doctrine of a future state, entertain sentiments on the subject, which are extremely confused, and inconsistent.

Although, among the inhabitants of New Holland, no traces of religion are perceived ; yet they appear to have some faint idea of a future existence, and think, that after death, they shall return to the clouds, whence they originally fell. (Bigland, iv. 414.) The inhabitants of the Pelew Islands entertain sentiments not essentially different from these. (Pinkerton ii. 480.)

The Chinese have some idea of a personal existence hereafter ; yet is this perfectly inconsistent with their belief, that the soul is part of Deity, and at death is absorbed in him again. Indeed, we are told by Sir George Staunton, that " few of the Chinese carry the objects, to be obtained by their devotion, beyond the benefits of this life." (Staunton's Emb. to China, ii. 273.)

The opinion, that the soul is part of God, and will be absorbed in him again, which was derived from the Greek philosophy, seems now extensively prevalent in the East. (Stewart's Phil. of the Mind, 240.)

The general opinion of the Ingrians, is, that the dead continue to live in the subterranean world, in the same manner as they did on the surface of the earth ; and that the grave is little more than a change of habitation. (Farmer's Wars of Hum. Spir. 421.) For this reason they bury their mon-

ey, that they may make use of it in the world to come. (Goldsmith's Geography.)

The following account is given of the Kamtchadales. "Men, they believe to be a compound of soul and body; and that immediately after death, the soul passes into another state of existence: which, however, most of them think, at best a very uncomfortable one, and therefore they have a great dread of death. But others expect to go into a better state, and one that will abound in sensual gratifications; and these sometimes put an end to their lives with much unconcern. Some also order their bodies to be burnt, as a means of purifyng them, and thereby securing them from the persecution of subterranean spirits. For they suppose all the dead to be in a place under ground.

Though they do not think the soul to be a solid substance, they think that its employments, and enjoyments too, in a future state, will be similar to those of this: and therefore they bury with them cattle and utensils of various kinds, whatever has been of use to them here." (Inst. of Mos. 109.)

The New Zealanders believe, that the soul, as soon as it is separated from the body, is engaged in war. (Chh. Miss. Mag. Aug. 1817, p. 346.)

From the imperfect view which has been taken, of pagan sentiments on the doctrine of a future life, it will not be denied, I suppose, that further instruction from some source or other, was much needed. But might not this darkness, however gross and extensive, have been sufficiently dispelled by the light of philosophy? This question seems to be answered by some of the facts now exhibited. The powers of philosophy have been tried. The most penetrating and soaring intellects were employed on this very subject. Still the darkness remained.

One reason why the philosophers of antiquity could not render clear the doctrine of immortality, was, that many of them did in no sense believe it. (Farmer on Worsh. of Human Spir. 296.) By four whole sects, according to Bishop Warburton, it was openly denied. (Div. Leg. 11. 109.)

Whether Aristotle is to be ranked among them, or not, remains uncertain. "Nothing is to be met with in his writings," says Dr. Enfield, which determines, whether he thought the soul of man mortal or immortal." (*Hist. of Philosophy*, 1. 285.)

Previously to forming any estimate of the sentiments, prevailing in the philosophic schools, on the doctrine of a future state, it seems necessary to make the following remarks.

We are not to conclude, that every one who spoke in elevated language concerning the immortality or divinity of the soul, really believed an individual or personal existence after death, or in any retribution whatever. The soul may exist after death without being rewarded or punished. And among those philosophers, who believed that the soul survives the body, it was a common sentiment, that human souls are parts of the divinity, and will be absorbed in him again. Dr. Cudworth, speaking of the Stoics, observes, that they considered "reason as nothing else but part of the divine spirit, immersed into a human body: so that these human souls were to them, no other than certain parts of God, or discerptions or avulsions from him." (*Intel. System* 1. 235.) (*Enfield* 1. 341.) (*Div. Leg.* 11. 205.) (*Enfield*, 1. 54.) This sentiment is known not to have been peculiar to the Stoics, but generally to have prevailed among the ancients. A similar idea prevailed over all the East. (*Priestley's Instit. of Moses*, 50, 52.) See *Burrows' China*, 458.) But when the soul is absorbed in Deity, it obviously ceases to exist as an individual, and is therefore incapable either of reward or punishment. (*Ryan's Effects of Religion*, 18.) It was justly observed by Madame de Stael, that "such an immortality looks terribly like death." It is true that some did not believe that this absorption immediately followed death; and supposed that the immediate space was passed in something like a retribution.

Further, those, who believed the soul immortal, likewise believed it eternal. This, by the author of the *Intellectual System*, is expressed in very forcible language. "Neither

was there ever any of the ancients before christianity, that held the soul's future permanency, who did not likewise hold its pre-existence." (Intellec. Sys. 1. 13.) Now it is apparent, at first sight, that the two opinions last mentioned, are well consistent with each other, but are alike unfavorable to the most correct views of a future state of reward and punishment. For if we existed before this life, and yet retain no remembrance of it, it cannot be supposed, that after this life, we shall have any remembrance of the present. By consequence, should we be happy or miserable, we shall never know, for what we are punished or rewarded.

Again, there is peculiar difficulty in ascertaining what opinions, relating to the soul, the ancient philosophers did entertain: as it appears to be a point well established, that they avowedly taught one set of opinions to the vulgar, and advocated a very different system in their own circles.

All these remarks it would seem, are applicable to Pythagoras. He held, indeed, that the soul made various transmigrations, before it was absorbed in the divine nature. (Enfield, 1. 397.) 'But these successive transitions of the soul into other bodies,' says the author of the Divine Legation of Moses, "were physical, necessary and exclusive of all moral considerations whatever." (Div. Legat. 2. 144.) We cannot, says Dr. Leland, lay any stress on the doctrine which he publicly taught, because he made no scruple of imposing on the people, things which he himself could not but know to be false.

If there was a person, not enlightened by revelation, who had clear and deep views of a future state, that person appears to have been Socrates. That the doctrine had a strong, practical influence on him, is beyond reasonable doubt. But was even Socrates able to place the doctrine of a retribution in a clear light?

1. Though he believed in the future existence of the soul, he did this on such a foundation, if it be rightly represented in the Phædon, as no christian philosopher, it is presumed, would consider, as adequate to support the superstructure.

2. He believed in the pre-existence of the soul, as well as in its future existence, and therefore could not, for the reason already assigned, have very correct views of reward and punishment. (Phædon 112.) Hindoos have the same belief. (Instit. of Moses 261.)

3. Though he believed the soul to be immortal, it was a subject, on which he made no pretensions to certainty. The conclusion of his defence before his judges, is well known: "Tis true, we must retire to our respective offices, you to live, and I to die. But whether you or I are going on the better expedition, is known to God only." (Apol. of Socrates, 28. 45. 47.) But even if Socrates were convinced, it is evident, that his disciples were not before, nor fully even at their last conversation. This shows that he was no adequate guide. The Stoics, agreeably to the observations already made, taught, that the soul of man, being of a divine nature, would either at death, or after some indefinite changes and agitations, again be united to the first principle, even God, and thus lose its individual existence. How little practical use they made of the doctrine, appears from this, that in the Enchiridion of Epictetus, where so many arguments are used in favor of contentment, and submission to divine providence, no arguments are drawn, no consolations are suggested from belief in a future and immortal life. (Warburton says they denied it. 11. 160.)

Cicero, it is well known, has expressed very elevated sentiments concerning the nature and powers of the human soul. He has professedly discussed the great subject of its immortality. But, notwithstanding the sublime language, and fine reasoning, which he has employed on the subject, it is far from being a settled point, that he believed the doctrine. (See Cicero's arguments, Tusc. Dic. L. 1. ch. 23.) In his epistles, which one would suppose likely to convey his real sentiments, are several passages, in which this doctrine is plainly denied. (Ep. L. v. 21. vi. 3. vi. 21.) However this be, a writer, who expresses himself on different occasions so variously, that those, who have studied his



works with most assiduity, have not been able to ascertain his real sentiments, is surely not to be considered an adequate guide to others. His own uncertainty is acknowledged in very strong terms, even in that very work, whose object it is to decide this great controversy. (5. Locke, ii. 323.) After mentioning a variety of opinions concerning the soul, he says, "Which of these opinions is true, some god must determine. Which is most probable, is a great question." (Tusc. Dis. L. 1. 9.) We may add to this, that whatever was the opinion of Cicero himself, on this subject, he represents the doctrine of those who deny the soul's immortality as more generally received; not by Epicureans alone, but by learned men in general. "*Cateræ veniunt contradicentium, ne solum Epicureorum, sed nescio quo modo doctissimus quisque contemnit.*"

Tacitus, who may, perhaps, be ranked with philosophers as well as historians, though he wrote after the christian doctrine of immortality had made extensive progress, speaks on the subject in the most doubtful terms. Contemplating the disease of Agricola, his father in law, for whom he appears to have entertained no ordinary degree of respect and affection, his mind recurs very naturally to the doctrine of a future state, which he speaks of as merely possible, "*si quis priorum manibus locus; si, ut sapientibus placet, non cum corpore extinguuntur magnæ animæ.*" (Vita Agricolæ.)

Pliny, the celebrated naturalist, in very strong terms, disavows all belief in a life to come, "All men, (says he,) are in the same condition after their last day, as before their first, nor have they any more sense, either in body or soul, after they are dead, than they had before they were born." Opinions of a contrary nature, he denominates, "childish and senseless fictions of mortals, who are ambitious of a never ending existence." (Nat. History. L. vii. cap. 55.)

"As to Varro, (says Dr. Ireland,) he is utterly silent as to the existence of a future state. Man, mortal man, is the beginning and end of his philosophy. To discover the art,

by which common life may be best conducted, is all his concern—the object of all his virtue. He never turned his views towards another world for the happiness, which he sought. And we must conclude concerning a genius, distinguished at Rome by his capacity of research, his depth of penetration, his strong judgment, and extensive learning, that he indulged no hope of immortality, and that, to his eyes, futurity was “one universal blank.”

From what has been said, we are now to make a few practical remarks. And,

I. We perceive the immense value of the christian religion.

Had revelation assured us of nothing but a future state of reward and punishment, it would even then have been a gift, not unworthy of divine munificence. This point so important to the hopes and happiness of man, we are confident, would never, merely by the efforts of human reason, have been established. There is no ground for believing, that the human understanding ever would have accomplished what had been for thousands of years attempted without success. Never was experiment more fairly or extensively made. To establish, on rational grounds, the doctrine of immortality, was an affair, in which all men were equally interested. No subject could have been more popular, or have received more general attention. Not only was the matter a long time under examination, but in conducting this examination were employed the most profound and soaring intellects; such as probably neither have been, nor ever will be executed. The result was, that these very philosophers had less belief in the soul's immortality, than the vulgar, who yielded to the current opinions, however absurd. But the Gospel does vastly more, than merely to settle the controversy concerning the soul's surviving the body. It leads to the most rational views of moral obligation; it represents the divine law as perfect, unyielding, and universal; and by consequence, that depraved beings can obtain none but a gratuitous justification. It not only reveals an economy of

mercy, but specifies the conditions, on which mercy may be obtained. It attributes that whole system of measures, which have been adopted for human salvation, to the intervention and sufferings of that august personage, in whom dwelt the fulness of Deity.

From the facts, which have now been stated, it appears, that christians of ordinary abilities and information, have not only a more established belief in a future state, than uninspired philosophy could impart ; but far more distinct, consistent, and rational views on the subject.

II. Our condition, as moral agents in a state of trial, is materially different from that of the heathen. All beyond the grave was to them peculiarly a land of darkness and shadows. All was obscure and fleeting. Nothing was well established, or well defined. If the soul were not extinguished by death, they knew nothing of its destiny ;—whether it would pass into the bodies of various animals ;—how long these transitions might continue ;—or whether the soul, as a distinct agent, would ever become stationary. Without discarding the whole system of pagan mythology, they could not be ascertained, even should there be a retribution, by what law its decisions would be regulated.

Upon us, on the contrary, so copious a flood of light hath burst from that world, which was otherwise concealed, as to leave all terrestrial objects scarcely distinguishable. If christianity be true, the present life is nothing, and that, which succeeds, is every thing. Whether we cast our eyes to the heavens above, or look on the earth beneath, nothing imperishable is presented to our view, but human beings. All the monuments of human art shall crumble to ruins,—the earth itself shall wax old as a garment,—“ all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll ; and all their host shall fall down, as a leaf falleth off from the vine, and the falling fig from the fig tree.” But the human soul is neither annihilated nor impaired by all the changes of the material universe. It will exist with all its powers of acting, of enjoying, and suffer-

ing. It will forever advance in knowledge, glory, and moral excellence, or sink in darkness, pollution, and misery. That intellectual spark, which our Creator hath placed within us, will soon kindle into the clear and resplendent glow of the Seraph, or into those flames of hatred, malice, and rage, that will eternally torment the reprobate. With such a belief, and with such expectations, our responsibility must be inexpressibly great; and, in the day of final judgment, the impenitent believer in revealed religion, will have occasion to envy the milder doom of pagan sinners.

III. In the light of our subject, we perceive the importance of the pastoral office. It relates to the immortal interests of man. "We are unto God," saith the apostle, "a sweet savour of Christ, in them, that are saved, and in them, that perish. To the one we are the savour of life unto life, to the other, the savour of death unto death."

As God has appointed, that the preaching of the word should be the ordinary medium, through which the gift of eternal life shall be bestowed on men, my fathers and brethren will permit me to suggest, how deeply we are answerable, both for the truth of our doctrines, and the clearness, with which we deliver them. What can be more important, than to give a true and distinct answer to this inquiry, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" If the physician mistakes the disorder of his patient, or the remedies, which ought to be applied, no worse effect can result from his error, than the taking of a few years from human life. If the jurist gives bad counsel to his client, the latter is forced to abandon prematurely that property, of which death must unavoidably divest him. If the statesman discerns not the true interest of his country, the evils resulting may indeed be extensive, but admit a remedy from his more upright or discerning successors. But, if the spiritual guide knows not the way of salvation, or fails of rendering it plain to his audience, the error admits no remedy,—their loss is irretrievable; for "the things, which are not seen are eternal." Nor does the subject less clearly teach us how well becoming

is seriousness to a christian minister. Men, who have in view a great object, cannot indulge habitual levity. This results from our natures. Such an object, by absorbing the attention, prevents smaller things from gaining access to the mind: or, if not, a comparison between them and that great object, to the contemplation of which the mind is accustomed, shows how unworthy the former are to engross human anxiety. It is asserted of that illustrious warrior and statesman, who is so justly the boast of our nation, that, during the more critical years of the revolutionary contest, he was seldom known to indulge in the least hilarity. The reason is obvious. He felt as a man, on whose shoulders rested the burden of a nation's cares. The christian minister has an object still more momentous. In his view are life and immortality; and this in relation not only to himself, but to his people. These considerations are rendered the more impressive by those instances of mortality, which so frequently occur. Every year the king of terrors makes new inroads on this Convention, and returns loaded with fresh spoils, to his abode of darkness and silence. Our fathers and brethren are not suffered to continue by reason of death. Several, whom we were accustomed to meet on occasions similar to the present, we shall behold no more, until "they, who are in their graves, shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth."

IV. If, at the dissolution of the body, immortal life is either gained or lost; how extremely important and difficult is the duty of the christian minister, when visiting the sick and the dying!

It is, indeed, of all hazards the most dreadful, to defer religion to a dying bed; and there is much reason to fear, that they who are then unjust, will be unjust still. But, though this is to be apprehended, it is not to be deemed a certainty. We know of no evidence, which proves, that the probation of man is closed, while reason and life remain. The sinner, who truly repents, will obtain immortal life, whatever be the state of his health, when this repentance commences. The day

and hours of sickness have, therefore, an immense value. And there are no occasions, on which ministerial address, and prudence, and resolution, are more severely tried. To conceal from a sick person his real danger is indeed the most inconsistent and cruel tenderness; though the communication ought, doubtless, to be made with all possible caution. To a dying christian, why should we be unwilling to give information, that his season of labour and conflict is nearly brought to a close? From a dying sinner, why should we dare to conceal a truth, the knowledge of which, by the power of divine grace, may contribute to his eternal salvation?

V. If so wide is the distinction between the religion of Christ and religion of nature, (as the latter has been understood both by ancient and modern pagans;) and, if it has been found after a long and extensive experiment, that, without divine revelation, the doctrine of immortality and a retribution is never likely to be made known, it is a duty imperiously demanded of christians to communicate their religion, to the heathen. If talents and learning are well employed as doubtless they are, in collating manuscripts and versions, so that, if possible, no jot nor tittle, may be taken from the word of God, or added to it; how undeniably commendable are their labors, who at every personal hazard, preach among the gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ! If, to preserve, restore, or expunge a single sentence, agreeably to the best evidence, that may be obtained, is an object, deserving severe and long continued scrutiny; how vast, how noble is the object of communicating to millions, essentially ignorant and degraded by vice, not a few sentences only, but the whole volume of divine truth!

VI. Finally, if the soul is immortal, as christianity assures us, vast importance must be attached to every human action. Every deed of christian charity—every act of munificence proceeding from the love of God, will be had in everlasting remembrance.

The occasion, on which we solicit your charity is well

known. We speak in behalf of the fatherless, and of such as have no helper. We invite you to deeds, by which the *widow's heart*, too long accustomed to notes of grief, shall be made to *sing for joy*; deeds, which shall be recognized to your infinite advantage at the day of judgment. For, "when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him," he will graciously condescend to say to them, whose beneficence has proceeded from "the good treasure of a good heart, I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: I was naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. For, inasmuch, as ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."

## SERMON II.

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The influence of revealed religion in ameliorating the condition of man.

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ISAIAH liv. 13. 14.

*And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord ; and great shall be the peace of thy children.*

*In righteousness shalt thou be established. Thou shalt be far from oppression ; for thou shalt not fear ; and from terror, for thou shalt not be afraid.*

THIS section of prophecy relates to the future condition of the church, and the accessions, which it should receive from the Gentiles. The two things foretold are these ; namely, their obedience to the revealed will of God, and their consequent external prosperity. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." The result of this will be, that they shall enjoy a well established government, political freedom, and lasting peace. "Great shall be the peace of thy children ;" or, as Bishop Lowth renders it, the "prosperity of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established. Thou shalt be far from oppression."

My present object is, to consider what natural connexion there may be between the character foretold and the blessings promised ; or, in other words, the influence, which revealed religion is likely to have in meliorating the present condition of man. This, it is hoped, will not be unsuitable on the anniversary of a society, whose object is to diffuse



the blessings of revelation, by imparting to the destitute that sacred volume, in which it is contained. Nor will it be thought inadmissible, that our attention should, on the present occasion, be chiefly directed to those effects, which the scriptures have a tendency to produce on the present condition of man, as the more important bearing, which they have on his future state is so usually the subject of our pulpit exercises. It may be important, that those, who contribute either property, or efforts, to increase or extend the knowledge of these sacred writings, should perceive, not only, that they are increasing the means of salvation, but are granting the most effectual aid to the interests of order and virtue, of private and social happiness.

That we may rightly estimate the tendency of revealed religion to improve the condition of human society, it shall be considered briefly in regard to its facts, discoveries, and precepts.

Suppose a nation existing without any other light, than that of their intellectual nature. Whether such a nation would believe in the existence of a supreme and divine power, I know not. That there are communities of human beings, who neither worship God, nor believe in his existence, seems to be a truth well supported. And, although an eternal Deity may be discovered from the order, beauty, and design, which are apparent in the structure of the world, it is not certain, that the discovery has ever been made by any but those, whose intellectual vision has been aided by some scattered rays from the luminous pages of inspiration. It may, with less hesitancy, be affirmed, that no nation, without such aid, has ever entertained any correct or consistent views on that momentous subject. This will create the less surprise, if we consider what gross, incoherent, and monstrous conceptions were entertained, as to the Sovereign of the universe, by some, whose superior talents and application led their contemporaries, and have induced all succeeding ages to denominate them the friends of wisdom.

A nation, therefore, destitute of light supernaturally com-

municated, would neither have no ideas of God, or those which were absurd, impious, or contradictory. Let it be supposed, that such a nation becomes universally acquainted with so much of the scriptures, as teaches not only the existence of God, but his unity, his natural perfections, and his agency in creating the world. Let them at once be informed, so as to produce conviction, that this world, which we inhabit is God's world; that He created it by his omnipotent power; that He spake and it was done;—that He said, “Let there be light, and there was light.” Were the information to stop here, I ask, whether even this would not produce, on the national feelings and character, consequences of real importance, and great extent? For, although nothing were mentioned as to the moral character of him, who created the world, nor of his present agency in human affairs, there would, I presume, be a sensible apprehension of both. It would be suspected, at least, that He, who created the world, had not abandoned it; and that He, who must necessarily have some moral character, was more likely to have that of uprightness, than any other. Is there a person present, who would not think, that a residence in such a community would be somewhat more tolerable, after so much light was conveyed, than previously? Let this community next be expressly taught, that the Author of the universe is not only intelligent, but of a character perfectly benevolent, and perfectly pure; so that no instance of moral disorder among his creatures can either escape his notice, or fail to excite his displeasure; and that his providence extending to the farthest limits of creation is exerted not less in the falling of a sparrow, than in the regular motion of the heavenly bodies;—let all this be fairly and forcibly exhibited to the view of all the individuals of the nation, and a change will be affected in their political condition, more universal and salutary, than any, which could result from the wisest laws, or the best form of civil polity. The characters, inscribed by the hand of God on the human mind;—that law, which the apostle tells us, is *wri-*

*ten on the heart*, would thenceforth become distinct and legible. This law too has many advantages, superior to those of any other. It is perfectly commensurate with moral agency. It reaches to all the modification of volition and feeling. In view of this law, there can be no distinction between duties of perfect and imperfect obligation. There is no virtue, nor virtuous disposition, which is not included in its commands; there is no vice, nor vicious propensity, not embraced among its prohibitions. And, whereas ten thousand culprits elude the vigilance of earthly sovereigns, no offence can be committed against the Governor of the universe, when he is not present. The delinquent, therefore, knows at the very moment, that his crime is not concealed.

Another most interesting fact, which revelation brings to our knowledge, is the incarnation and sufferings of Jesus Christ.

With whatever soundness of argument, the doctrine of divine moral government might have been established, there would be danger of its being called in question; or, at least, that its influence would be diminished, if, during a long succession of ages, no discrimination were apparent between the friends and enemies of virtue. Many would be likely to say, that the course of events, falling within our observation, does not seem well to correspond with the doctrine of divine moral perfections. If the Author of the Universe has a moral character, and has ordained for his creatures a moral law, it is obvious, that He cannot look on such a world, as ours, without indignation,—the tranquility of Heaven itself must be disturbed by the crimes committed on earth. The Deity would not, it should seem, have permitted several thousand years to pass, without rendering conspicuous the light, in which he viewed the transgressions of men.

Now, by the intervention of our Saviour, every shadow of difficulty, hence arising, is made to disappear; all ground of scepticism is perfectly removed. The disobedience of man has disturbed the tranquility of heaven. A messenger has been thence commissioned; even He, in

whom dwelt the fulness of Godhead bodily, "to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and judgment." An exhibition of the interest, which God takes in human affairs,—of the sensibility, so to speak, with which he contemplates all violations of a moral law, more striking, than that which is implied in this event, cannot be imagined. Whatever contempt may be thrown on the doctrine of our Saviour's atonement, either by those who reject christianity, or by those who profess it, I must be permitted to think, that the line of distinction between virtue and vice, never appears so broad and well defined;—that the law of God never appears so sacred, or clothed with such celestial glory, as when it is viewed through the medium of our Saviour's death; and when it is considered, that the object of this wonderful event was, "that God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

I now ask, whether this small number of facts, were they so clearly revealed to a community of atheists, as to gain general belief, would not produce an extensive change of habits and character: whether the morals, and consequently the political condition of such a community would not be essentially improved? and whether the most powerful individual on earth, could, by any other means, render them a service, so important to their present happiness and tranquility, as by convincing them of these facts?

We next proceed to consider what motives to a virtuous life are furnished by those discoveries which are contained in the sacred scriptures. These writings render it certain, not merely, that death is not the end of man, but that man as a living agent, will have no end:—that all human actions, desires and emotions are reserved for future examination:—that this examination will be public, attended with circumstances of the most awful solemnity;—and that consequent to the decision, then to be made, will be rewards and punishment, great in degree and endless in duration.

No person, without calling in question the first principles of human action, can doubt, that these discoveries impose on the

disorderly passions of man the most powerful restraint; and that they afford a proportionable encouragement to virtue. All civil laws make their appeal to our self love. They design to make it for our interest to demean ourselves as good members of the state. Punishment is an evil, designed to overbalance the supposed advantages of doing wrong. But the sanctions of human laws are far less impulsive, than those of the divine law. No present good is so great, but that hell is a greater evil. No present sufferings are so great, but that heaven is a greater good. In view of christianity, therefore, there can be no possible case, in which the offender will not eventually sustain a loss; there being in the divine government, no want, either of perspicuousness to detect crimes, or of power to punish them.

This reasoning, you may imagine, is ineffectual by proving too much: for it seems to prove, that where revelation is enjoyed, no crimes will be committed,—a conclusion, sufficiently refuted by observation. I answer, that we should be no more authorised in concluding, that the motives, exhibited in scripture, have no influence in preventing vice, because they do not prevent all vices, than in concluding that human laws have no tendency to suppress crimes, because all the members of civil society are not innocent. The fact is, that men, enslaved by present feelings, do not act according to what they are habitually convinced would best promote their own advantage. Whatever reason we may have to be surprised at the prevalence of vice, in countries, where the divine law, with its tremendous sanctions, has been clearly revealed, it is far from being true, that its restraining influence is inconsiderable. If christianity does not make all men good members of the state, it prevents them at least, from being as injurious, as they would be without it. By any, who have been attentive in the observation of facts, this will not be called in question. Let public worship and public instruction be suspended in any town or village, for the space of a quarter of a century, and you will not fail to perceive a very disadvantageous change in

the state of morals. If, for another period of equal duration, copies of the scripture should become scarce, and those which remained, should be little regarded, the current of moral corruption, already strong, would become impetuous and overbearing. It cannot have escaped the notice of any one, that when profligate men are attempting to ensnare those, who are younger or less criminal, than themselves, they sedulously abstract them from all those places and occasions, with which are connected ideas of a future state or day of judgment.

We should hazard nothing in asserting, that, were a nation to lose all its civil institutions, still retaining rational, genuine, and deep views of religion, its happiness and safety would be far better secured, than they could be, under the best political constitution and the wisest laws, with an entire oblivion of God and a future state.

Some opinion may be formed of the consequences, which would now result from the loss of religion, by adverting to that memorable period in the history of the Jews, when their sacred writings lay hid in the temple. During this time, idolatry and national disorders rapidly increased. In the guilt of these disorders, men of every rank and station appear to have been involved. When at length the scriptures were discovered, the king, in great consternation, exclaimed, "Go ye, and inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah concerning the words of this book, that is found : for great is the wrath of the Lord, that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of the book, to do according to all that, which is written concerning us." The message of God to the nation was this, "Behold I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book, which the king of Judah hath read, because they have forsaken me, and have burnt incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands : therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and it shall not be quenched."

We will now consider the requirements of revelation, *first* in general, and then in regard to particular precepts.

As to the general requirements of revelation, they are these, To make a right use of our intellectual powers; to estimate objects according to their value: and to form a character, comprehending feelings and actions, *corresponding* with such estimation.

Revelation makes its first appeal to the reason of *man*: it offers evidence; and it requires him to proportion his belief precisely to that evidence: it does not permit, that his assent should be either greater, or less, than may be supported on solid ground. "If I do not the works of my Father," said our Saviour, "believe me not." "Now, I tell you, before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass ye may believe, that I am he." "I speak as unto wise men," saith the apostle, "judge ye what I say." God requires us to believe nothing, which, on an impartial consideration of the evidence afforded, it would not be irrational to reject. Reason teaches us, that a religion, founded on miracles and the accomplishment of prophecy, *must* be true. It then teaches us, that every doctrine, certainly contained in such a religion, must likewise be true. Limited as our reason is, there are many things in the scriptures, beyond its grasp: many which, without supernatural aid, it could not have discovered; many, the manner of whose existence is still incomprehensible. Such is the doctrine of a resurrection, and that of our Lord's incarnation. Neither of these is inconsistent with reason; but both are unquestionably above it: i.e. reason, unaided by revelation, can form no opinion on these subjects. Were the doctrines casually suggested to the mind, the understanding could neither affirm, nor deny. What then has reason to do with them? Plainly this, to determine whether they are taught in those scriptures, which are given by inspiration of God. If they are, it is irrational to call them in question; because reason will not permit us to doubt the truth of the Almighty.

But revelation requires not only, that we proportion our

assent to the evidence exhibited, but that we estimate objects according to their importance. If it forbids us to covet riches, it is because there is nothing, which "a man can give in exchange for his soul." If the scriptures enjoin it as a duty to "love God with all the heart, soul, strength and mind, it is because of the infinite splendour of his moral perfections, and because of those "rivers of pleasure, which flow at his right hand." If it directs us not to "set our affections on things below, but on those, which are above," it is because "the things, which are seen, are temporal; and the things, which are not seen, are eternal."

As revelation teaches us to esteem objects according to their importance, it demands, that our deportment should correspond with such estimation: by consequence, when there is competition between the favor of God and the approbation of men, between our future inheritance and our present advantage, it is made our duty, in both cases, to give to the former a willing and decided preference.

Now, even without taking into consideration what, in particular, that course is, which religion prescribes, it would be exceedingly obvious, that the influence of these general principles is conducive to the well being of civil society. How effectually would this be secured, were all men to make a right use of their understanding;—estimate all objects according to their importance;—and cherish feelings and character, corresponding with such estimation !

To throw additional light on the subject, we will notice distinctly a few of the moral precepts contained in the volume of inspiration; "Render to all men their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Recompense no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teacheth, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." In the



decatalogue is contained a solid compend of moral prohibitions; and our Lord has, in a few words, enjoined every duty, which belongs to man, as a social being. "Whatsoever things, ye would that men should do unto you, do ye the same to them."

From that view of the subject, which has now been taken, does it not appear evident, beyond contradiction, that, in proportion as the principles of revelation are known, and practically adopted, the condition of man in a social and civil state, must be immensely improved? Would not these principles diffuse integrity and benevolence through all ranks of a community, making subjects virtuous and happy, and rulers wise and lenient? When, therefore, the mass of the people in any nation, shall be "taught of the Lord," i.e. live under the influence of revealed religion, "great will be their peace. In righteousness will they be established; they will be far from oppression, for they shall not fear; and from terror, for they shall not be afraid."

For the enforcing of christian principles, and the observance of christian institutions, we have, therefore, exhibited a motive, to which no person, not wholly indifferent to the present condition of his fellow men, can be insensible. But there is another view of the subject, which ought, in a much higher degree, to engage our attention. Though civil society is a very interesting state of human existence, there is another, which, in point of importance and duration, is infinitely more so. In less than a century, we ourselves, our families, and connexions, together with the present population of our country, and the world, shall, with enlarged capacities for enjoyment or suffering, be transferred to another state. As to the existence and duration of this state, christianity is the only religion on earth, which gives us authentic and satisfactory instruction. Neither from any other source, can we be informed, on what conditions its pains may be avoided, and its bliss obtained. Jesus Christ is himself "the resurrection and the life. Whosoever liveth and believeth on him, though he die, yet shall he live." The bible

does not indeed ensure salvation to all, who read it: but it does render their salvation more probable, than it otherwise would be. It brings to their knowledge a series of events, and a system of doctrines, in the highest possible degree, calculated to exercise the understanding, to rouse the imagination, and affect the heart. It describes our ruin, and offers a remedy.

Whether we contemplate christian religion in regard to its influence on the present character and happiness of men, or in relation to that boundless scene, which it opens to our fears and our hopes, the propriety of combining efforts for the purpose of extending its influence is strikingly apparent. In prosecuting this object, we know, that we are engaged in a good work. It is the same work, which has employed the attention of apostles, prophets, martyrs, of Jesus Christ, and of God the Father. So far, therefore, as we are engaged in it, we are *workers together with God*. If the contents of the sacred volume were worthy of being communicated from God to men by a series of miracles, are they not worthy of being conveyed from us to others, when it can be done by ordinary means, and with little labor? It is not the design of God, that his word should be confined to any one nation, or to any particular section of the earth. Wherever there are sufferings to be alleviated, vices to be reformed, or hearts to be renewed, his purpose is, that the doctrines of revealed religion shall be proclaimed. "Go," saith Jesus Christ, "into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." One way of complying with this command is, by sending among the ignorant, whether in heathen or christian countries, the discourses of Christ, and the writings of his inspired disciples.

We are to notice likewise, that this purpose of God in regard to the propagation of revealed truth, will be accomplished. "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord." They, therefore, who, impelled by an ardent desire, that all nations should be refreshed by streams issuing from the fountain of life, unite, for that object, their

prayers and their labors, cannot be accused of indulging a vain hope.

But, if such an event shall ever occur, you imagine, perhaps, that it will be produced by miraculous interposition, and, of course, that human exertions will be superseded.

A few moments reflection on well known facts, will, it is believed, be sufficient to diminish your confidence in this conclusion. At the time, when christianity originated, far the greater part of Europe was inhabited by idolatrous barbarians. All Europe has now received christianity. Yet this change was not effected by new miracles. That, within one century from the present time, the Gospel should be preached among all nations, is not more improbable, than ten years before their occurrence, were some of those events, which have taken place in our own age. The time is within the recollection of almost all present, when the spirit of infidelity was widely spreading throughout all christendom. In our own country, publications, traducing revealed religion, were read with avidity, and, consequently, not without effect. The current against it was rapid and boisterous: and those, who did not consider, that "the foundation of God standeth sure," scarcely resisted the impression, that they saw a trembling in the edifice, which presaged speedy ruin. The scriptures were falling into disuse, and were treated with disrespect. But, "when the enemy was coming in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord raised up a standard against him." Societies for sending forth missionaries, for distributing the scriptures, and for translating them into languages in which they had never appeared, have been multiplied to a degree, exciting general astonishment, though less, than might justly be produced by an event of such very extraordinary a character. These same scriptures, which were attacked with wit, derision, and a kind of malignant triumph, are now, distributed in the four quarters of the globe, at the expense of many hundred thousands a year. That, which was spoken by the prophet, is now confirmed. "They shall see, to whom He was not spoken of; and they, that have

not heard, shall understand." If such has been the result of christian effort, continued but for twenty years, the way being so far prepared, what may we not expect for a century to come; and that too without any thing, but a usual blessing on human exertions! In this connexion, and on this occasion, I cannot forbear to mention, that splendid and august combination of rank, wealth, talents, and religion, The British and Foreign Bible Society. Of such an institution I know not how to speak in language, more appropriate, than that, which the scriptures afford. "I saw and behold a tree in the midst of the earth; and the height thereof was great. The tree grew and was strong; and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much." Those leaves are, by the auspicious gales of heaven, wafted to distant islands and continents, and are scattered around for the *healing of the nations*. The roots have struck deep: they have extended to remote lands, germinating in every congenial soil, producing trees of inferior size, but of the same fruit and foilage, as the parent stock.

When the nature and tendency of revelation are considered, no christian can reflect, without a mixture of surprise and delight, that Bible Societies, in vigorous activity, now exist, not only in England and Scotland, but in Holland, Germany, Prussia, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, and Russia, in Europe.—At Calcutta and Bombay in Asia.—At the Isle of France, St. Helena, and at the Cape of Good Hope in Africa.—At Jamaica, among the American Islands, and in various parts of the United States.

When the millenium will commence, or what in particular will be the state of things, during that happy period, I know not. But, when we contemplate the simultaneous and powerful efforts, which in various ways, are now making in so many christian nations, and reflect on the natural influence of revealed truth on the condition of man, whether considered as a social or an immortal being, it is impossible to avoid the belief, that a broad foundation is laid for human happi-

ness and virtue; and that these great measures will eventually issue in "peace on earth, and good will towards men."

The interest, taken by so many among our own countrymen, in this great enterprise of benevolence and piety, justifies animating hopes, as to the condition of posterity. When we shall have "fallen asleep, not being permitted to continue by reason of death," our children will not be left to pass their probation in a nation of infidels. They will not, we confidently hope, be taught that death is everlasting sleep; nor to deny, that "God, who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake to the Jewish nation by the prophets, hath in these last ages, spoken to the world by his Son." They will find objects and institutions, at once indicating, and promoting reverence for God and revealed religion. That spirit, which now moves the whole christian world, will, it is believed, in their day, be more active and widely diffused. They will witness the removal of some of those obstacles, which yet impede the propagation of christianity. Much will be done in their day, and more in the days of their posterity, that "valleys may be filled, and mountains and hills be brought low." "My spirit, that is upon thee, and my words, which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from hence forth and forever."

*My fathers and brethren of the Maine Bible Society,*

If the value and tendency of the holy scriptures have been fairly represented, men seldom meet together for a purpose more important, than that, for which we are now assembled. Is our social, moral, or religious state so perfect, as to need no improvement? Has it not been shown, that there is no method better calculated to effect such improvement, than the propagation of that system of truth, which is contained in the oracles of God? Have our endeavors been commensurate, either with the objects of the institution, or with our own ability? When I speak of ability, I mean to comprehend that patronage, which we might obtain, were

greater interest excited, and corresponding endeavors used. Compared with other societies of a similar nature, can it be said, that we have performed our contingent of labor, or have offered our proportion of sacrifice? If others have not done too much, we have unquestionably done too little. With no greater ardor, than we have displayed, to instruct the ignorant, and reclaim the vicious in our own district, would the sacred writings have been, in the course of a few years, diffused in sixty different languages or dialects?—Would they have been sent to China, India, Persia, and the regions bordering on the Caspian Sea? When there are about forty Bible Societies in the United States, is it too much, that *one* should be liberally supported in the District of Maine? Whatever duties we owe, either to religion, or the public, admit no delay. The king of terrors is every year making new inroads, & returns, loaded with fresh spoils, to his abode of darkness and silence. Since our last anniversary, the late venerable president of this Society,\* has closed his earthly labors. “What thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for in the grave, there is no work, knowledge, or device.”

To the subject, now before us, I beg leave to call the attention of this whole assembly.

We solicit your charity for no exceptionable, or doubtful object. We are not asking you to favor one denomination of christians in exclusion of another; but to put into the hands of the ignorant poor that word, by which they may judge of christian truth; and by which they must themselves be judged at the last day.

Can you, in any way, more suitable than this, testify gratitude for your present security from that hostile attack, and perhaps wanton conflagration, which a few months since, you so justly apprehended, and which, but for the return of peace, you might, before the present time, have actually witnessed? The benefactions now solicited are for enlarging and confirming the empire of the Prince of Peace. Let

\* The Rev. Samuel Deane, D. D.

the scriptures be known, studied, and obeyed through the world, and war shall never again disturb or desolate the nations.

No more shall nation against nation rise,  
Nor ardent warriors meet with hateful eyes,  
Nor fields, with gleaming steel be cover'd o'er,  
The brazen trumpet kindle rage no more.  
But useless lances into scythes shall bend,  
And the broad falchion in a ploughshare end.

As to the proximity of our Saviour's reign on earth, his friends may, indeed, be disappointed. When they are looking for permanent and extensive peace, new wars may be kindled. There may again "be distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, and men's hearts failing for fear, and for looking after those things, which are coming upon the earth." But those revolutions, which disturb the world, do not shake the foundation of the christian's hope. "God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

What has recently been done for the furtherance of the gospel, has not been effected, while the nations were flourishing and tranquil. If, therefore the earth is to be visited with new desolations, we need not apprehend, that the great interest which is so dear to christians, will be abandoned. "The walls of Jerusalem shall be built in troublous times. Therefore will we not fear though the earth should be removed, and though the mountains should be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of our God: the holy place of the tabernacle of the most High."

## SERMON III.

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On the evils of War and the probability of the universal prevalence of Peace.

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### PSALM lxxii. 7.

*In his days shall the righteous flourish : and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth.*

THIS Psalm, it is believed, refers to Solomon, as typifying the Messiah. In colours of uncommon beauty, it portrays the blessings of good government ; blessings which will never be fully enjoyed, till “ the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.”

In the present discourse, the following arrangement will be observed. After showing, that war is a calamity, both extensive and severe, I shall attempt, from the text and other passages of scripture, to return an answer to this inquiry, “ Shall the sword devour forever ?”

War is a calamity of very wide extent. Originating in the depravity of the human heart, it is likely to prevail, wherever there are human beings, in whom this depravity is unsubdued. Accordingly we find, that war has been common in every age, and among all nations, whether barbarous or refined. Contention began, even before the civil state could have been formed. It commenced in the first family, and during the life of our first parents. Abel was



slain by the hands of a brother. As the number of human beings increased, similar enormities became more common. As a reason why God destroyed all flesh by a deluge, it is recorded, that the "earth was filled with violence." It is probably in reference to this, that God immediately after the deluge, with so much solemnity, prohibited the wanton destruction of human life; "And surely your blood of your lives will I require. At the hand of every beast will I require it; and at the hand of every man; and at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Who-so sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." (Gen. ix. 5.)

The passion for war and conquest was next displayed in Nimrod, who, to the character of a mighty hunter, added that of a chieftain and statesman. In the days of Abraham, kings had formed alliances for the purpose of war. Nine kings were joined together in one battle in the "vale of Siddim." (Gen. xiv. 3.)

When the descendants of Israel were established in the land of Canaan, they had wars not unfrequently among themselves, and almost perpetually with surrounding nations. The history of the Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, is, for the most part, military history. These nations have long since disappeared. After having trampled on the rights of states less powerful; after having, for many ages, revelled with impunity on the spoils of others; at length made feeble by their own greatness, they were vanquished, in succession, by other states, possessing the same ambition, but not, like themselves, enervated by age and luxury. So universally have events corresponded with the declaration of Christ; "He that taketh the sword, shall perish by the sword." The great kingdoms and empires of ancient times, with all their power and splendor, were, at different periods, swept from the earth by the storms of war. The prophet Ezekiel, with a mind glowing with inspiration, has imagined that world which contains the spirits of all the dead. As death is the end of all men, war is represented by him as

the death of nations. "Ashur is there and all her company. His graves are round about him: all of them slain, fallen by the sword. Whose graves are set in the sides of the pit, and her company is round about her grave: all of them slain, fallen by the sword; which are gone down, uncircumcised, to the nether parts of the earth, which caused their terror in the land of the living: yet they have borne their shame with them, that go down to the pit. There is Mesheck and Tubal, with all her multitude: her graves are round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain with the sword, though they caused their terror in the land of the living. And they shall not lie with the mighty, that are slain of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to hell with their weapons of war: and they have laid their swords under their heads. But their iniquity shall be upon their bones: though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living. There is Edom, her kings, and all her princes, which, with their might, are laid by them, that are slain by the sword. There be the princes of the North, all of them, and all the Zidonians, which are gone down with the slain. With their terror they are ashamed of their might; and they bear their shame with them, that go down to the pit."

The remarks, which we have made in reference to ancient kingdoms and empires, may be applied to modern Europe. In its history nothing is so prominent, and nothing so much engrosses the attention, as the operation and consequences of war. Those hordes of barbarians, that, from different quarters, and at different times, invaded and eventually crushed the Roman empire, were of a character, daring, ferocious, and warlike. (Liv. v. 36.) They scarcely pretend to any other right, than that which was founded on their courage, fortune and military strength. "We carry, said they, our right in our arms; and all things are the property of brave men." (Liv. Lib. v.) Whoever considers the extent and power of the Roman empire, will readily perceive, that its subversion could not have been effected,

without infinite sufferings, and enormous waste of human lives. As the states, now occupying Europe, were formed by a union of those hordes, with fragments of the ancient empire, they have inherited the same spirit, somewhat broken indeed, and softened by the progress of refinement, and the mild genius of christianity. Among these states, the last twenty years have constituted an era of pre-eminent desolation.

Hitherto we have alluded to those nations and empires, with which history is most familiar. But the calamity and opprobrium of war are not confined to any community or division of the human race. When America was first exhibited to the view of an astonished world, its inhabitants were not found, in this respect, to possess any peculiar traits of character. Impelled by the same passions, they gave vent to them in the same manner. Their enterprises were those of hunting and war, i. e. their chief employment was to preserve their own lives, and to kill their enemies. A similar remark may be made in reference to the savage inhabitants, possessing the isles, either of the Pacific or Indian Ocean. They are known to have been, in the words of inspiration, "hateful, and hating one another."

From the remarks, already made, it appears, that whatever pre-eminence man may possess, when compared with other animals inhabiting the globe, this superiority is not evinced by the absence of hostile feelings and habits. Wherever there are human beings, there are wars; wherever wars exist, there is deadly hatred;—a public, systematical endeavor to shed human blood. Nor are we to imagine, that though war may be an evil, from which no nation is wholly exempt, it is, however, an evil of unfrequent occurrence. From the building of Rome, to the reign of Augustus; i. e. for a period of more than seven hundred years, the temple of Janus was shut but twice: i. e. with only two interruptions, the Romans had war for seven centuries. From an account, published in London, four years since, it appears that from the year 1110 to 1813, the number of

Wars between France and England, was twenty four; and that two hundred and sixty years of the seven hundred were employed by these nations, in hostility and mutual destruction: that from 1161, to 1471, a term of three hundred and ten years, one hundred and eighty six were spent in war; that from 1368 they were at war one hundred and one years in one hundred and three, having a peace only of two years duration. In the national character either of the ancient Romans, or of the modern French and English, ferocity cannot be considered, as characteristic. If other nations, therefore, have not, for as great a proportion of the time, endured the burdens, and felt the calamities of war, it must be attributed to fortuitous causes, and not to moral principle.

It will readily occur to you, that, even if the evils of war were moderate in their kind, they would still compose a vast aggregate, considering their great extent, and the frequency of their occurrence. We are next to show, that the evils of war are not moderate in their kind.

It is, by no means, my intention, on this occasion, to attempt a finished picture. I shall only sketch a few of its hard and prominent features: and these will be exhibited, not in the glowing colors, which imagination might furnish, but in the simple attire of authentic history.

In every war, it has been thought, that as many perish by fatigue, casualty, and disease, as are slain in battle; and those, who are slain in one battle, may, or may not be a small part of all, that fall in arms, during the existence of a war. In the battle, fought at Issus, between Darius and Alexander, the former is stated to have lost one hundred and ten thousand. In the first battle, which the Romans fought with the Cimbri and Teutones, nations of Germany, the latter slew of their invaders, eighty thousand. In the second battle, the fortune of war was changed, and the Germans lost one hundred and forty thousand slain.\* When Attale entered

\* Of 40,000, who were in the city of Avaricum, scarce 300 survived. *Cæsar. Gal. vii. 28.*

Gaul, at the head of a vast army of Huns, in one battle with Theodoric, king of the Visigoths, he lost, says the historian, at least, one hundred and sixty thousand men.† The loss, sustained by the French, in the battle of Crecy, was somewhat more than thirty thousand. In the battle of Angora, in 1402, between Bajazet and Tamerlane, the whole number of slain is stated, by the Abbe Millot, to have been three hundred and forty thousand. In the action at Malplaquet, the Duke of Marlborough, though victorious, is said to have left twenty thousand men dead on the field.\* The loss, sustained by the enemy, was probably greater. Of the number killed in the dreadful battle of Borodino, fresh in the minds of all present, accounts essentially vary. The mean number is fifty thousand.

But, ceasing to confine our attention to a single battle, we may extend it to the whole Russian campaign. Of the four hundred thousand warriors, who had crossed the Niemen, scarcely twenty thousand men returned. Of the Italian troops, commanded by the Viceroy, not more than eight hundred survived.

The savage features of war are very distinctly seen, when we contemplate the besieging of towns and strongly fortified places. While the siege is maintained, there are no intervals, as to the excitement and terror. There is perpetually a fearful anticipation of the final result. To increase this evil, and to render it the more insupportable, the body may be worn down with fatigue, and perhaps exhausted by famine. So extreme is sometimes the hunger of the besieged, that human flesh, nay, the flesh of friends and children has been consumed for food. At the siege of Paris, in the latter part of the sixteenth century, human bones were pulverized, and used for bread. In view of what the besieged endure, and what they anticipate, it will hardly create surprise, that some, reduced to desperation by their sufferings

† Le Sage mentions the number, as 300,000. See *Atlas Historique*, &c.

\* One hundred thousand massacred at the siege of Philopolis, Gibbon. i. 399. Persians lost 30,000 at the siege of Amida, Gib. iii. 209.

and their prospects, have, by voluntary death, anticipated both the course of nature, and the violence of their invaders. Accordingly, after the destruction of Jerusalem, certain Jews, who took refuge in the castle of Masada, being closely besieged by the Romans, at the persuasion of their leader, first murdered their wives and children; then they slew one another, till but one remained, who, having set fire to the castle, stabbed himself. Something similar to this occurred in Spain, during the second Punic war. The inhabitants of Saguntum, that they might not fall into the hands of the Carthaginian army, burnt themselves, with their houses and all their effects. When Tragan was engaged in his second war with the Dacians, in one of their cities, besieged by the Romans, the men, despairing of its longer defence, having slain their wives and children, secretly withdrew to a large cavern in the mountains. There, unable to sustain or defend themselves, they procured a large quantity of poison; dissolved it in a caldron; when a few individuals were appointed to deal out the fatal potion to the crowds, who rushed eagerly round this fountain of death.

Should you ask, why the inhabitants of a besieged town should be rendered desperate by the prospect of speedy capture, I beg leave to refer you to facts of no distant date,—to accounts of no uncertain authority. When the gates of Moscow had been forced in the late war, so horrid were the outrages, committed on the persons of all, whom they discovered, “that fathers, desperate to save their children from pollution, would set fire to their place of refuge, and find a surer asylum in its flames.” “Nothing,” says Labaume, a French officer, present on the occasion, “could equal the anguish, which absorbed every feeling heart, and which increased in the dead of night, by the cries of the miserable victims, who were savagely murdered, and by the screams of defenceless females, who vainly fled for protection to their weeping mothers.

In view of that immense variety of sufferings, which results from war, imagination, fatigued and distracted, acknowledges the inadequacy of her powers. Your cor-

ceptions may, however, be, in some measure, aided by reflecting on the alarming apprehensions, which, but a few years since, were entertained for this town, for your own families, and your own persons. Had invasion, which was not improbable, actually occurred; had it issued in capture and temporary subjugation, which was, doubtless, far within the limits of possibility, in your families and dwelling places, now the abodes of domestic tranquillity, scenes of wanton waste and desolation might have been exhibited, acts of barbarity and gross licentiousness might have been perpetrated. But if war, in our own country has never appeared in its full array of horrors, it must not be forgotten, that thousands, to whom it has thus appeared, have felt, not less than we, attachment to life, fears of violent death, love to their families and altars, sensibility to the sufferings, or dishonor, of their parents, their wives, and their children.

In contemplation of the facts, which have now been mentioned, every person, possessing feelings, either of religion or humanity, is led to inquire, whether the future is to resemble the past; whether the earth is doomed to continue, through all ages, the theatre of national wars; whether, as the human mind is cultivated, and as science and the arts are carried to greater perfection, both will be employed in devising new instruments and methods for destroying the hopes, disturbing the enjoyments, consuming the habitations, and wasting the lives of men. In other words, "Shall the sword devour forever?"

To answer this question will now be attempted. I take it for granted, that all, to whom I am speaking, believe the christian religion; and believe further, that Almighty God does not want the power to execute his promises and determinations. On these promises it is no difficult matter to establish a conclusion, highly favorable to the best feelings and hopes of mankind.

I. The empire of Christ, by which I mean the diffusion

and effects of the christian religion, shall be universal. "All kings shall bow down before him: yea, all nations shall serve him. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth:—The stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, (as seen in Nebuchadnezzar's vision,) itself became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

This kingdom shall be, not only universal, but perpetual. "The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, (saith the prophet Daniel,) which shall never be destroyed.—The kingdoms of this world, (said the great voices in heaven,) shall become the kingdoms of our God, and he shall reign forever and ever.—I have made a covenant with my chosen; I have sworn unto David my servant; his seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven."

Considering the character of him, who is placed at the head of this empire, namely, the Prince of Peace, its mild and pacific nature was to have been presumed. But testimony, as to this point, is explicit and satisfactory, "In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb: the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together: and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plough shares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

My hearers, I ask you to entertain no visionary expectations, no dreams of a distempered fancy. But I take the



liberty of appealing to you, whether a state of greater peace, order, and virtue, may not be confidently predicted, without credulity, or rashness? Do men ever expect, or require, on the most important subjects, better evidence, on which to rest their opinions, than that which has now been exhibited? Is there any peculiar ambiguity in those passages of scripture, which have now been cited? Of that variety of figures, which they embrace, is the general import questionable? If then the scriptures are of divine origin, and do contain promises of universal and perpetual peace on earth, we are not only permitted, but required to believe, that the time is coming, when wars shall no longer disturb the nations. "God is not a man that he should lie, neither the Son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall not he do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" But in the present instance, our faith is confirmed, by seeing the manner in which the event foretold shall be accomplished. There is an obvious connexion between the influence of christianity and the annihilation of war. No philosophical statesman can attribute war to any other cause, than that, which has been assigned to it by the pen of inspiration. "Whence come wars and fightings? Come they not hence even of your lusts, that war in your members?" Had the king of Assyria imbibed a spirit, similar to that, which christianity inculcates, would he have boasted, saying, "I have removed the bounds of the people and have robbed their treasures, and have put down the inhabitants as a valiant man?" Had the states of Greece cordially imbibed a religion, like that of Jesus, should we ever have heard of a Peloponnesian war? Had the son of Phillip embraced such a religion, would he have invaded Scythia, and crossed the Indus? Had Rome, whether under kings, consuls, or emperors, known the doctrines of Him, who spake from heaven, and received the truth in the love of it, would she have been perpetually engaged in wars of conquest and ambition? Or if Europe, for the last twenty years, had been, really, as she was, nominally, christian,

would the whole earth and ocean have resounded with the noise of her battles? We do not attempt to maintain, that there is any power, in the christian *name*, which will frighten from the earth the demon of war. Christianity will render communities good and pacific, so far only, as they adopt its principles, submit to its restraints, and obey its injunctions?

If any person doubts, that the tendency of this religion corresponds with the proclamation, by which angels announced the advent of its Author;—if any one doubts, that its genuine influence is to promote “peace on earth, and good will towards men,” he may readily obtain satisfaction by consulting the doctrines of Christ, or the writings of his inspired apostles. “Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.—Love your enemies; do good to them, that hate you; pray for them, that despitefully use you, and persecute you. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.—Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good.” Christianity strikes at the root of angry contention; its object is to seize upon the heart. Streams are rendered salutary, if you can first exhale from the fountain its deadly qualities.

But is there any thing, you may ask, in the present state or aspect of the world, which indicates the approach of better days? May tranquillity, among the nations, be more rationally anticipated, at present, than at any former period? Doubtless it may. The world exhibits many symptoms of moral convalescence. The christian religion has become an object of peculiar interest, in the christian world. Believers in this religion have recently begun to feel, with a sensibility, hitherto unknown, both their privileges and their obligations. As they attempt to open the eyes of the heath-

en, their own visual perception becomes more clear and distinct. In whatever nation, community, or family, much effort is made to teach pagans the way of salvation, some alteration for the better will be experienced in its own religious knowledge, in its moral habits and character. But we have shown, that as the knowledge and spirit of christianity are diffused, the temper and practices of men become more pacific, reason is more regarded, and the passions of the human heart, if not subdued, are chastened and restrained.

It is known to most of my hearers, that on the 26th of September, 1815, was formed at Paris, a confederation, denominated the *Holy League*, between the emperors of Austria and Russia, and the king of Prussia. These princes declare "solemnly, that the present act has no other object than to show in the face of the universe, their unwavering determination to adopt, for the rule of their conduct, both in the administration of their respective states and in their political relations with every other government, the precepts of this holy religion, the precepts of justice, of charity, and of peace." Other powers have since, it appears, acceded to this solemn covenant.

In whatever view the matter is contemplated, it is impossible not to consider this coalition among the most extraordinary and interesting occurrences of modern times. What is the real character of these potentates, in respect to religion, can not be determined by a public document of this kind. But that they wish to be considered by their respective subjects, and by the world, as the patrons of christianity, there can be no doubt. To maintain this character, they will, at least, discountenance infidelity, and make provision, that their subjects may enjoy the advantages of religious instruction. In this way, kings do become *nursing fathers* to the church. In this way is the gospel honored in the view of men, its doctrines become more known, and its precepts more regarded. But, in this imperial covenant, there is not only an express and solemn re-

## SERMON IV.

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The truth of Christianity proved from its legitimate moral effects.

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JOHN. ix 30.

*The man answered and said, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.*

SUCH was the judicious answer of one, who, having been born blind, had, from the power of Jesus, recently received the blessing of sight.

Much attention among the people being excited by this miracle of Christ, but two ways of proceeding lay open to his enemies. One was to disprove the fact; the other, to deny the inference, which was likely to be drawn from it. With a view to the former, they summoned, as witnesses, the parents of him, who had received the cure, and severely interrogated them, as to the blindness of their son. Vexed and mortified, perceiving, that every new inquiry issued in giving not only additional certainty, but increased conspicuity to the miracle; their next object was to prevent the people from hence forming any conclusion, favorable to our Saviour's claims and character. "This man, say they, is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day.—We know, that God spake by Moses; as for this fellow, we know not whence he is." Then follows the reasoning of

him, for whose benefit the miracle had been wrought. "Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now, we know, that God heareth not sinners ; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth. Since the world began, was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one, that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing."

The force of this reasoning could be resisted by nothing but inveterate prejudice. And such, at present, seems to be the universal concession. No persons, I believe, in our own times, deny the christian religion, who, at the same time, allow the miracles, attributed to its author. It is doubtful, in the mind of no one, that, if the miracles were wrought, the religion is true.

My object in this discourse, is not to illustrate the argument, contained in the text ; but, by a similar mode of reasoning, to prove the truth of christianity, from its legitimate moral effects.

Preliminary to this, a few remarks will be made, as to the change, which the gospel has effected in religious sentiment, or theory.

Few of my auditors, perhaps, need to be informed, concerning the great outlines of pagan mythology. It is not easy, and perhaps not possible to form exaggerated conceptions of the absurdity, grossness, and immoral tendency of heathen sentiments and heathen worship. Thousands of gods demanded homage from men ; gods, whose origin, exposures, adventures, sufferings, and escapes :—whose forms, in some instances frightful and monstrous,—whose passions, usually impetuous and uncontrolled,—whose quarrels, displaying all the weakness, misery and revenge of mortals,—whose characters, in almost all instances, hostile to reason and virtue,—were transmitted in mythological tales, sung by enraptured poets, or distinctly brought to view in the very act of worship. In devotional services, rendered to

such gods, it would be absurd to suppose, that pure and spiritual dispositions,—feelings of veneration, confidence, and love, would constitute any part. Such feelings, on such an occasion, would have been incongruous in the worshippers, and most severely reproachful to the objects of worship. Such feelings were not required. If the gods were angry, their wrath was to be appeased, not by a *moral reformation*, an amendment of the heart and character, but by some idle ceremonies, with which character had no connexion;—some stagnant water was to be put in motion,—some lake was to be drained off,—a nail was to be driven into a consecrated temple,—or some games or ceremonies, fallen into disuse, were to be renewed. In perfect consistency with the character attributed to their gods, gross and abominable crimes were not only allowed, but deemed a necessary part of that religion, which the laws had established. When the apostle uses this language, “It is a shame even to speak of those things, which are done by them in secret,” he alludes to certain practices, which, in the worship of the gods, were sanctioned by public opinion.

Consider now, for a single moment, what religious sentiments were inculcated by the gospel. There is *one God*, without beginning, dependence, imperfection, or change,—possessing unlimited power, unsearchable wisdom, and perfect goodness. This one living and true God maintains a government, embracing all beings and all events, whether great or small. The law, which he has enacted for his intelligent creation, is the law of virtue. His estimation of men and angels, is exactly proportionate to their observance or neglect of this law. *God is a spirit*; and they who worship Him, must do it in spirit and in truth. No sacrifices, however costly,—no prayers, in whatever words conceived, with whatever looks or gestures accompanied,—no punctilious adherence to forms and ceremonies, even though such forms and ceremonies are of divine institution, will meet acceptance and obtain reward, so long as there is wanting at heart, a sincere, shall I say, an honest regard to the law of God;—a principle

of piety, which prompts to the performance of all duty. They, only, who imbibe and retain this principle, will experience the mercy of God, in that day, when he will judge the world in righteousness. And this mercy is to be exercised through the atonement of him, "who, by one offering, has perfected forever them, that are sanctified."

From these general remarks it will be apparent, that darkness and light are scarcely more opposite, than that religion, which Jesus Christ found, and that, which he left, among men. Were there present a single infidel, I would appeal to his reason, and even to his candor, whether the christian *theory of religion*, is not, beyond comparison and beyond utterance, superior to that, which the heathen world, whether Greek or barbarian, had received; and whether any one, who preached successfully this religion among the heathen, might not be said "to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light:" and whether it is credible, that a Jewish mechanic, born in circumstances, which precluded intellectual research, should, all at once, have brought to light, a system of grace and truth, for which the whole world had been engaged for thousands of years, in painful, but unavailing search.

As there is an important connexion between the intellectual and moral nature of man;—as disorderly practice naturally results from false and inconsistent theories, and the perception of a direct path does, of itself, imply a strong inducement to pursue it,—it was to have been expected, that, wherever the pure, intelligible, and consistent doctrines of christianity should take place of the gross darkness, which had previously covered the earth, a corresponding change would be effected in the state of moral character and moral feeling.

We shall now endeavor to show, that, agreeably to such an expectation, the effect of christianity has been displayed in changing national customs,—in meliorating public morals, and in converting great numbers, in christian countries, from a life, either of open vice, or religious insensibility.

In proof of our *first* proposition, but few instances will be cited from the multitude, which might be adduced. In exhibiting these, I shall use the words of a late writer, justly held in high estimation. Christianity "has mitigated the conduct of war, and the treatment of captives. It has softened the administration of despotic, or nominally despotic governments. It has abolished polygamy. It has restrained the licentiousness of divorce. It has put an end to the exposure of children, and immolation of slaves. It has suppressed the combats of gladiators, and the impurities of religious rites. It has greatly meliorated the condition of the laborious part, that is to say, of the mass of every community, by procuring for them a day of weekly rest. In all countries, in which it is professed, it has produced many establishments for the relief of sickness and poverty: and, in some, a regular and general provision by law. It has triumphed over the slavery, established in the Roman empire: it is contending, and, I trust, will, one day prevail against the worse slavery of the West Indies." (Paley's Evidences, 370.)

The spirit of investigation and commercial enterprise has done much to prevent man from continuing a stranger to his species. Remote seas have been visited, continents have been traversed, and islands have been discovered. Of the many millions of pagans, thus introduced to our knowledge, it would be difficult to find a single tribe or community, among whom the relations and duties of man are either regarded, or understood. If we do not look for morality among the inhabitants of Japan, or China, or Hindostan, as little was it found among the aborigines of America, or on the islands of the Pacific Ocean.

Now, wherever christianity is introduced, it is invariably accompanied with a moral reformation, commensurate with the attention it receives, and the degree, in which it is suffered to influence the character.

It occurs to your minds, perhaps, that little praise can be bestowed on the morals of many a nation, where christianity



has for a long time, been received. This is indeed true; but it militates nothing with the preceding assertion, which is, that "when this religion is introduced into a community or nation, it produces a moral reformation, commensurate with the attention it receives, and to the degree, in which it is suffered to influence the character." That christianity has abrogated many national customs, which were hostile to virtue, and introduced others of an opposite tendency, is too obvious to be denied. That it has raised the standard of morality in every nation, where its authority has been acknowledged, may be asserted with equal confidence. Of this no man can be doubtful, who contemplates those enormities, which have been already alluded to, as practised among the heathen; which were not only tolerated, but justified by public opinion, and some of them by established laws. But christianity is a religion of choice, and not of compulsion. It is not answerable for those, who do not yield to its authority. Its pre-eminence over every other religion is sufficiently shown, if its moral tendency is superior to theirs; and if individuals and nations are distinguished for virtue in proportion, as they are sensible to its motives, and obedient to its precepts. Now, to any person, who has read the New Testament, an appeal may be safely made, as to its moral tendency, and as to the dispositions and behavior of any man, or body of men, who should, with conscience and good fidelity, adopt its principles as the rule of life.

We next proceed to show, as was intended, that the effect of christianity has been displayed in converting many among nominal christians from a life either of open vice or religious insensibility.

Previous presumption against this will be diminished, or entirely removed by a recurrence to the early history of the church.

St. Paul has informed us, as to the change, which religion produced in the character of some, who were afterwards members of the Corinthian church. Having enumerated idolaters,

effeminate, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners, he subjoins, "and such were some of you; but ye are washed; but ye are sanctified; but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God.

As public morals, in a christian community, are far better, than they were before the introduction of christianity, it is not to be expected, that its visible effect on character should ordinarily be as striking among ourselves, as it was in the instances just cited. Religion imposes restraint, in a greater or less degree, on every individual of a christian nation. It produces the appearance of convalescence, in a thousand instances, where the source of the disease is not removed. It renders the maniac less wild and ferocious, even where the empire of reason is never regained. On the other hand, a real change of character, by which I mean renovation of heart, may be effected, either at so early a period, or under such circumstances, as to prevent the change from being immediately obvious, either to the subject of it, or to those around him. Still it is a fact, perfectly well established, that in those christian countries, where the doctrines of religion are fairly exhibited,—in our own country, at every period of its history, the gospel has effected, in the character of great numbers, an obvious and permanent change. The fact, now mentioned, is of as palpable a kind, and as fairly exposed to observation, as any appearances of nature, or as any of those events, which are recorded in civil history. Persons, who have been as little restrained by the moral precepts of christianity, as attached to its appropriate sentiments and duties, have manifested an entire change of taste, habits, and character; engaging ardently, and from inclination, in pursuits, which they previously viewed, not merely with indifference, but with strong aversion.

But a change of character may be distinctly visible in persons, who were never chargeable with habits of vice. Many of this description are so conscious, that their characters are not formed according to the standard of christianity, that they would be surprised, and perhaps offended,

were they suspected of having imbibed the christian temper. In the minds of many individuals among this class of nominal believers, a change has been produced, scarcely less evident to an attentive observer, than that, which we have just described. New views have been obtained as to the condition and responsibility of man, the obligations of virtue, and the whole christian economy.

That the gospel is entitled to praise for having produced a great melioration of temper and habits in some men of a character decidedly vicious, will, perhaps, be granted, without seeming reluctance. Such persons need to become, in almost all things, the reverse of what they now are. They ought, indeed, to be made "new creatures." In reference to such, who set every principle of virtue at defiance, "old things" should indeed "be done away, and all things should become new." But you are not ready, perhaps, to allow, that it redounds to the honor of christianity, to have been instrumental of producing sorrow, penitence and a broken heart, in persons, whose characters have exhibited nothing peculiarly defective, or reprehensible. In these instances, it may be, religion appears to you more obtrusive, than beneficent,—interposing a severe authority, where nothing was wanting, but mild correctives.

To this complaint against religion, I would, by no means, reply with petulance, or precipitation. If the complaint is well founded, it will endure rational discussion. But if it shuns examination, it should not be reiterated.

What, permit me to ask, are the prominent traits, in the life of a rational man? Are not these, that he prefers the greater to the less; that his regard to objects is apportioned to their intrinsic value;—that good characters are preferred to bad; and, that, among the former, those are most loved, whose goodness is pre-eminent? If these are sound principles, you cannot be misled by any inferences, to which they fairly give rise. From the first of these; namely, the greater is to be preferred to the less, it follows, that no man lives a rational life, who does not make the salvation of his

soul an object of principal attention. That this is done by all men, who are chargeable with no very distinct breaches of morality, will not, I presume, be asserted. It is a fact, too obvious to require proof, that even among those, in whose deportment civil laws find nothing to censure, thousands have almost as little reference to a future state, as if the soul's immortality were not an article of their creed. Far from feeling anxiety as to salvation, they would consider such anxiety as evincing a mind, either inflamed by enthusiasm, or darkened by superstition. Among even those, therefore, whose morals are in no high degree exceptionable, there are many, who cannot be said to live conformably to the dictates of reason. Our language is, indeed, much too feeble for the occasion. For what can be more dangerous; what a greater outrage on all principles of prudence and rational self love, than for a being, conscious of possessing immortal powers,—a mind, vastly capacious both of pleasure and pain, to concentrate his affection on a world, which he may this night be called to abandon, and condemn that immeasurable existence, which religion has taught him to expect?

It is another trait in the character of a rational man, that his estimate of objects should be apportioned to their value. Is this proof of intellectual sanity wanting to none, but those whose lives are polluted with gross profligacy? Consider the nature of those discoveries, which religion makes,—their purity, their grandeur, and awful sublimity. Consider what is implied in “sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God;” in being associated with “an innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect:”—in being admitted to the “presence of Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and of God, the Judge of all.” In addition to this, consider what is implied in the loss of the soul,—banishment from God,—in “being punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power!” Now let what is habitually passing in the mind, and displaying itself in the

character of innumerable inoffensive persons of either sex, and of every condition, be compared with that train of thinking and feeling, which corresponds with those solemn, commanding, and, (if I may be allowed to speak so,) those absorbing objects, which, by the gospel of Christ, are forced upon our observation;—and then let any man determine, whether merely an abstinence from palpable vice necessarily implies a character, founded on the basis of reason.

It is further implied in the character of a rational man, that in his estimate of moral beings, the good should be preferred to the bad, and that among the former, those should be most highly esteemed, whose goodness is pre-eminent.—One part of the proposition results from the other. If it is reasonable to love virtue, they are to be most loved, in whom virtue is most conspicuous. The virtue, that is, the holiness of the Supreme Being, is transcendent and perfect. He is therefore, to be regarded, not merely with the approbation of the intellects, but with the highest affection of the heart; agreeably to the words of our Saviour, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” Now, is a principle of divine love as extensive in its influence on human character, as it is rational in itself? But none, in whom this principle is not predominant, can be said to live rationally.

It has now been proved, I conceive, that many, besides such as have rendered themselves conspicuous for vice, may yet need an alteration of character, a change of heart, or spiritual renovation. Nor is any thing more common than to find individuals of decent deportment and many interesting qualities, who are conscious, nevertheless, of not being actuated by christian motives,—of not having imbibed the christian spirit. That power, which belongs to the christian religion;—that energy, of which our Saviour speaks, when he says, concerning his own doctrines, “They are spirit and they are life,” is therefore, as truly excellent, though less observable, when it produces affections of piety,

in the sinner of more decorous habits, as when the unrestrained profligate renounces, with abhorrence, his accustomed enormities.

We hence perceive, that the evidence, which supports the christian religion, is abundant and various.

In addition to the miracles, which the Saviour wrought; the prophecies, which were fulfilled in him, or delivered by him, and since accomplished;—in addition to all the evidence resulting from the rapid progress, which this religion made, when first promulgated, the reforming influence, which it has had on those, who have embraced it, and, through their means, on the habits and morals of nations, is, of itself, a distinct proof. In the dawn of the christian era, to what distant and various nations were the tidings of salvation conveyed! To what multitudes was the arm of the Lord revealed! How great was the change, which christianity effected in those, who, in consequence of receiving it “turned from dumb idols, to serve the living God, and to wait for his Son from heaven!” Every instance of real conversion, is fresh proof of the divine commission of Christ;—the divine origin of that blessed religion, which thus transforms the heart! Christianity is immutable; its influence is uniform. They who embrace it now, have the same temper and general traits of character, as those, to whom the apostolic ministry was made “the power of God unto salvation.” The same remark may be applied to all pious christians, who have lived during the intermediate ages. To use the language of the New Testament, “They have all drunk of the same spirit.” Now, could we bring into one view all the vices, which christianity has either suppressed or exterminated, and all the private, social, and public virtues, to which it has given rise, in the various nations, to which its light has extended, and during the eighteen centuries of its existence on earth, how great would be the mass of evidence hence arising to support its claims to a divine origin! This evidence is perpetually increasing. It is a broad river which widens and deepens in its progress.

We conclude by a few remarks by way of inference and improvement.

1. We perceive the impropriety, not to use severer language, of representing reason and religion, as standing in a hostile attitude in reference to each other. No man lives rationally, we have shown, who does not live piously. Reason and a well instructed conscience, will acquit no person, whom religion condemns. The sentence, pronounced at one of these tribunals, is never reversed at the other. At both the sinner meets precisely the same reception. For the truth of this, I might appeal to every person in this assembly, whether saint or sinner. When the christian finds, that the language of scripture is that of remonstrance, reprehension, and terror, in relation to his spiritual sloth, his unchristian feelings, or his undeniable apostasies, does he obtain relief by appealing from her decision, to that of reason and conscience? Does reason approve ingratitude in one, who has been redeemed by the Son of God? Does she approve inaction, insensibility, and a careless deportment, in one, who is urged to "fight the good fight of faith," and thus to "lay hold on eternal life;"—in one, of whom it is said, "To him, that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father, on his throne?"—When, from the loud remonstrances both of the law and the gospel, the sinner retires in solitude, there to examine his character and life by the standard of reason, are his fears allayed; are confidence and self approbation restored? Does his understanding ever take part with him against the "oracles of God?" The more accurately and profoundly he examines the nature and tendency of a sinful life, in view of the divine law and character,—in view of his own dependence,—in view of that immeasurable field, which immortality lays open both to his fears and his hopes,—in view, both of what he knows as to the frailty of this life, and of what he is taught in religion, as to the duration of another,—does the sinner ever feel himself acquitted for his neglect of Christ

and salvation? Does he feel himself justified, as a man,—as a rational being? Does he ever come to this conclusion, from a dispassionate view of his powers, relations, and prospects, that, whatever be the language of his Creator, in regard to him, it ought to be that of approbation? Recollect the day, or the month, or the year, when, after having been somewhat disquieted by this passage of scripture; “What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul;” upon deliberate examination, you found your mind tranquillized by perceiving, that habitual neglect of God and obedience to your passions, are, in no measure, inconsistent with the reason, dignity, and interest of man! No; a day, when reason condemned religion, or assented to the claims of sensuality, impiety, and unbelief, has not been found in the long era of six thousand years: it will not be found in all the unceasing revolutions of eternity!

2. From the preceding discourse it appears, that they, who are employed in diffusing the light of christianity, are prosecuting the most noble object. If christian worship and christian obedience constitute a reasonable service,—if, in proportion as men become christians, they return thereby to a state of intellectual and moral soundness, how honorable,—how rational,—how benevolent is that desire, which is now so extensively felt and warmly cherished by the church of God, that the darkness, which broods over the pagan nations, may be dispelled, and that light may become resplendent, where it now shines but with tremulous and glimmering ray? Whether we always prosecute this object with right motives, or by the best means, may fairly enough be made a question; but let no man doubt, whether the object itself is entitled to human attention:—let no man doubt, that it would justify, nay, that it imperiously demands, far greater exertions, than those, which the christian world is now making to accomplish it. It is the same object, for which the Son of God became incarnate,—and for which



his apostles encountered all the labors and perils of their arduous ministration!

3. If the truth of christianity is shown by its legitimate moral effects, we perceive how much the interests of religion are affected by the character of those, who profess themselves its votaries. In no unimportant sense, my brethren, every christian is placed on missionary ground. Within the sphere of his influence are many, who live "without hope, and without God in the world." If, in his disposition and habits the temper of Christ is rendered conspicuous, it will be likely to produce alarm and conviction in those, who are conscious of irreligion. Here is a kind of missionary service, to which we are bound, permit me to say, even more strongly than to any other. To send preachers among the destitute, whether at home or abroad, becomes a duty only in reference to the end to be accomplished; whereas the general virtues of a christian life, besides being conducive to a similar end, possess inherent excellence, and are of eternal and immutable obligation. It was, therefore, with good reason, that our Saviour said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven."

## SERMON V.

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On Conscience.

—ooo—

ROMANS ii. 15.

*—Their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts, the mean while, accusing, or else excusing, one another.*

THESE words are part of a sentence, in which St. Paul describes the character and condition of pagans. He shows, that, though destitute of supernatural revelation, they have, in common with all men, certain degrees of light communicated to them, relating to God and moral obligation. "The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things, that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead."—Again, "When the Gentiles, who have not the law, do, by nature, the things, contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves. Which show the works of the law written on their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile, accusing or else excusing one another." By the light, communicated to the Gentiles, are meant their rational powers, taken in connexion with all those objects of nature, in contemplating which they may be employed.

The apostle may, therefore, be considered, as affirming,

that Gentiles, to whom no special revelation has been made, are yet furnished with a power of moral discernment;—a rule, which is actually applied, in a greater or less degree, both to their own behavior, and to that of others. That it was applied to their own actions, appears from these words, “Their consciences also bearing them witness;” and that it was applied to the actions of others, is shown in what immediately follows, “Their thoughts, the mean while, accusing, or else excusing one another.” By praising some actions, as virtuous, and condemning others as vicious, they implicitly acknowledge a difference between virtue and vice,—and that the one was of good, and the other of ill desert.

My present object is to consider the nature and power of that principle in man, which is usually denominated conscience, or the moral sense.

*First*, we shall inquire into the nature of this principle. That we may do this the more successfully, let me request you to direct your attention, for a few moments, to that difference, which is acknowledged to exist in human actions.

Some actions, you well know, are thought worthy of approbation; and others, of blame. This difference does not depend on the casual result of such actions; but on the intention, with which they are supposed to be performed. Were a person to exert himself for a long time, and with much industry, to advance the interest of his neighbors, or that of the public, and should be frustrated in his designs, by some casualty, which no sagacity could foresee, he could never blame himself for the event, nor reflect on his intentions and efforts with other feelings, than those of approbation; in both which respects, the feelings and judgment of all persons of sober reflection would correspond with his own. They could not but feel, that his endeavors had been such, as to entitle him to esteem. And, as for the unforeseen issue, they could no more contemplate that with censure, than he could with remorse.—On the other hand, should a man form purposes, either of treachery, or treason

and, by a seasonable discovery, or some unexpected occurrence, real good should result to those, who were to have been the victims of his crime, his own character, both to himself and others, must appear precisely the same, as if his purposes had been executed. The emotions, with which the mind contemplates virtue or vice, are entirely different from those, with which it contemplates advantage or disadvantage, pleasure or pain. Men never feel remorse for misfortunes, as such, or for things, which are unavoidable. But, consequent on the perpetration of a crime, there is remorse, shame, self reproach, a sense of unworthiness. No man is afraid to meet himself, because he has been unfortunate; but thousands have dreaded solitude, after the performance of an impious, dishonest, cruel, or malignant action. Misfortunes may produce grief; but nothing but the consciousness of crime is followed by remorse.

The existence of these facts, as they fall within the observation of all men, will hardly be denied. From the rational nature, which God has given us, we perceive a difference between virtue and vice as readily and as unavoidably, as between a mountain and a valley, between a crooked line and a straight one, between the light of day and the darkness of midnight. You never can bring the mind to judge of falsehood, injustice, ingratitude, and selfishness in general, as right, and worthy of praise; nor of kindness, benevolence, and honesty, as wrong. This moral discernment of a difference in human actions: this judgment, which we form of human conduct, whether our own, or that of others, requires neither long deliberation, extraordinary intellectual powers, nor a high degree of mental refinement. That ingratitude towards benefactors, and a cold indifference to the wants and sufferings of others, are qualities of ill desert and character, is as clearly apparent to the mind of a cottager, as to the apprehension of a statesman or prince.

Though the general distinction between virtue and vice may be considered, as intuitively apparent, and universally acknowledged, there may, doubtless, be an individual action,

whose circumstances and relations are such, as to render questionable its moral denomination. Such, in the apostolic age, was the eating of meats, which had been offered to idols; and the observance of particular days. So likewise may passion, or self interest, prevent men from judging rightly of their own deportment, on particular occasions, when the case itself involves no real difficulty.

That king David's moral discernment, as it respected human actions in general, was not impaired during the time of his apostasy and impenitence, appears by the prompt decision, which he made in reference to the unfeeling oppressor, whose cruelty was portrayed in Nathan's parable. His own more aggravated offence, was viewed at the same time, without uneasiness or self reproach. As self interest may blind a judge, who, in ordinary cases, discerns with accuracy, and forms righteous decisions; so may conscience be seduced to remain silent, or yield her assent to the claims of passion. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Paul, before his conversion, "verily thought, that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of the Lord Jesus." The time has been, when other persecutors of truth have thought, that they were doing God service. But in none of these cases, can we suppose, that there was any physical inability to discern the will of God, and the consequent path of duty. No man sins through unavoidable ignorance. It may, perhaps, be considered, as universally true, that moral discernment never fails, but in consequence of a disordered heart.

This power of moral discernment, of which we are speaking is attended with present consequences of great moment, and has the most interesting relation to the retributions of another life. No sooner do we discern a right and wrong in human actions, than the one is approved, and the other condemned. The actions of others may be condemned without pain to ourselves. But when this moral discernment is applied to our own actions, feeling, and character, the effects are sensibly felt. We are so constituted, that we

cannot, without uneasiness, see the right and follow the wrong. When reason and character are at variance;—when acknowledged propriety and duty are on one side, and inclination and actions are on the other, a man finds himself unhappy, just in proportion as this disagreement is discerned and regarded. This dissatisfaction and self-reproach is a punishment immediately consequent on his violating the law in the mind;—a punishment, which is increased, whether he contemplates God, who is the author of this law,—or his fellow men, who, he knows, have the same law, and cannot but condemn every quality, or action, by which it is violated. Hence we see, with what propriety, this law in the mind has been said to be of such an extraordinary nature, as to execute itself. The sinner not only perceives, that there is a law; but he feels the effects of it. He is not only condemned, but punished by a tribunal established in his own breast.

Besides, if we perceive a difference between right and wrong, it is certain, not only, that God must see the same difference; but that it is He, who enables us to perceive it. It may be considered, therefore, as a law, which has a divine author, and by which we are required to govern ourselves. The sinner, therefore, not only condemns himself, but is conscious of being under the condemnation of God; who sees far more distinctly than he can, the beauty and worth of virtue, and the deformity and turpitude of vice. Consequently, in addition to his self reproach, he has well grounded apprehensions of “danger, a fearful looking for of judgment,” at a tribunal, whose decisions will not only confirm those of his own mind, but be followed by consequences of more dreadful import.

Perhaps conscience has been rightly defined, “as nothing more, than our own opinion, or judgment, of the moral rectitude, or pravity of our own actions.” Whether it is reason, or a distinct principle of our nature, which leads us to form this judgment, is not material. Certain it is, that something within us does sit in judgment on our

selves : and that the decision, which this something inclines us to make, is generally speaking, though not invariably, a right decision. Hence it is common to make appeals to the conscience, the reason, the judgment, even of vicious men ; in whom it is believed, that the moral sense, though in some measure benumbed, or perverted, is not extinct.

We now proceed to notice some instances, in which the power of conscience has been displayed. When Adam, first after his defection, heard the voice of God, he concealed "himself among the trees of the garden." He was reproached, not only by the expostulation of his Maker but by his own mind. He knew that the displeasure of God was just, and that therefore, no adequate, no reasonable defence could be made. Pharaoh, on several occasions, felt remorse, when reflecting on his perfidious impiety. "The Lord is righteous, said he ; but I and my people are wicked." Saul, during all the latter part of his life, was rendered an object of compassion by the habitual checks and forebodings of conscience. He knew, and sometimes acknowledged, that his rival was divinely designated to fill the throne of Israel. Yet his malignant passions impelled him to persecute this rival with unremitting industry. Ahab had sent into all lands to apprehend the prophet Elijah, under pretence, that the latter had brought the judgments of God on the nation. At their first interview, the king accosts the prophet thus, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" To which the prophet boldly replies, "I am not he that troubleth Israel : but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord." The prophet was now in the king's power. Why then was he not punished, as had been intended? Evidently for this reason, Ahab was not less condemned by his own mind, than he was by the prophet's reply. He was, in truth, more afraid of the prophet, than the prophet was of him.

When Judas had betrayed Christ, and had received the stipulated recompense, the terrors of his own conscience arrayed themselves against him. The language of the evan-

gelist is, " He saw, that he was condemned." The sentence was immediately followed by punishment; I mean by remorse, so intolerable, that the unhappy sinner could no longer endure it. By violent means he disengages himself from a burdensome life, to ascertain whether any future pains can be greater, than the anguish of mind, by which he is now tormented.

In ages and places, less remote, the power of conscience has been displayed in a similar manner. Sometimes self-reproaches are loudly uttered. Instances are not wanting of persons, who, having, by flagitious means, acquired, and for many years, enjoyed wealth and influence, have been rebuked by their consciences so suddenly and efficaciously, that they not only disclosed crimes, of which they had never been suspected, but implored the merited punishment. Others, in a state of mind, more dangerous and desperate, have imitated the perfidious disciple, and procured death by their own hands, that they might at once know the worst of their destiny.

There are other effects of self condemnation, less powerful, indeed, but more common. To the view of every person, two rival interests are displayed. Reason, religion, and a well directed conscience are on one side; and they always speak the same language. On the other, are indolence and all those evil passions, which are seated in the human breast. If the three powerful monitors, first mentioned, could be effectually silenced; could reason, conscience, and religion be induced forever to withdraw their claims, men might, by obeying no law, but that of appetite, be as happy in brutal pleasure, as the very brutes themselves. But, before these monitors can be silenced, much time and effort must be employed; much conflict must be maintained, and many wounds received. It was, long since, asserted, the " way of transgressors is hard." The truth of this has been severely felt by many, while forming an attachment to particular vices. Persons of dissipated and prodigal habits, have many hours, when reflection is painful, and even existence is irksome. It is not easy for a



man to bring himself to abandon all claims to a rational and moral nature. Even pride will remonstrate against so base a relinquishment. A man cannot easily be induced deliberately to say, "As for the dictates of reason and the obligations of morality;—all that is sublime in the one, or beautiful in the other, I renounce forever. Ye rational beings, whether angels or men, with you I will no longer lay claim to alliance. Whatever pleasures you have, either in possession or prospect, they shall be exclusively your own. From this moment I cease to be a competitor." But so long as reason is not renounced, it will support the claims, both of christian morals and christian piety. He that wastes his time, follows his passions, or neglects his soul, acts as certainly against his own judgment,—his own conviction of right and wrong, as against the commands and principles of divine revelation. Infinite responsibility is attached to the possession of intellectual and moral powers. Whether time or eternity is regarded, reason demands a life of sobriety, caution, and self denial. Now, is it possible, that a man should be otherwise, than miserable, who is forever at warfare with himself: who pursues habitually the very course, which he condemns? In the full enjoyment of youth and of health unimpaired, in the midst of gay, splendid and fashionable vices, many persons,—even those, who have been thought as happy, as vice could make them, have even wished to exchange their species;—have wished to be divested of their rational nature, that they might be no longer tormented with the anticipation of a judgment to come! Individuals, who have rendered themselves conspicuous by ridiculing serious religion, calling its sorrows moroseness, and its joys enthusiasm, have been alarmed even by the sound of a shaken leaf, and have fled to scenes of dissipation, as their only retreat from terror.

We shall now make several reflections by way of improvement.

I. If there are such qualities, as virtue and vice, it is infinitely important, that the distinction between them should be

perceived. This power of discerning the line, which separates them, is, therefore, a most important part of our moral constitution. But the natural tendency of a thoughtless sinful life, is to enfeeble this power, to prevent it from forming right decisions, and to render the heart insensible to its dictates. If the moral sense, that guide, which God has graciously appointed to direct human feelings and conduct, is either destroyed, or blinded, or corrupted, the whole life will be marked with doubts, confusion and guilt. To this our Saviour seems to have had reference in the following words, "If the light, which is in you, be darkness, how great is that darkness."

II. As the moral sense is impaired by habitual vice,—as men accustom themselves to act, without regard to reason or the divine law, moral distinctions are forgotten, and a general apathy prevails on religious subjects. To remove this apathy by fixing the mind on these subjects, by causing it clearly to perceive moral distinctions, and the eternal obligations of virtue and holiness, is the first effect produced by divine influence in regeneration. The sinner is led to apply to his own heart and actions, that immutable law, which is binding on every intelligent being. His surprise, anxiety, and terror, result from contemplating his character, his obligations, and his danger. He perceives what is right, and is conscious, at the same time, of possessing a strong inclination to that, which is wrong. "I was alive without the law once," saith the apostle; "but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." No person, in a similar state of mind, can doubt, that there is a perfect agreement between reason and the divine law, or deny, that the latter is holy, just, and good; but he "sees another law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin and death." The anxiety, felt by persons in these circumstances, naturally results, perhaps, from their perception of danger.

III. It has been asserted, in this discourse, that reason and religion are always found on the same side, and speak

the same language. For the truth of this I make a deliberate and solemn appeal to all present. In religion, what is implied? It is implied, that our present characters should be formed on the principle of the soul's immortality;—that we labor chiefly for that “meat, which endureth to everlasting life.” I ask, whether it is, or is not, the dictate of reason, that our estimate of objects, and attention to them, should be apportioned to their value?—and whether our present precarious, fragile existence should engross our thoughts, or be regarded only in subordination to that eternity, which is to come? Is there a person present, that will say, the greater is to be sacrificed to the less; that a thousand years should be preferred to a million, and that the short space of human life should be preferred to both?—It is implied in religion, that we love God. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart.” If this demand appears extravagant, or absurd, permit me to ask, whether it is rational to love virtue and virtuous men?—Whether it is rational to love those most, who have most virtue? If so, whether we may not be required to love supremely Him, whose moral attributes are without limits, or imperfection?—It is implied in religion, that our hearts should be rendered penitent and contrite, in view of sin. “Thus saith the High and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity. To this man will I look, even to him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.” When one friend is perfidious to another, when a parent has been abused by his children, when a man has insulted or oppressed his neighbor, what is always demanded of the injurious party? Acknowledgements, expressing sincere and ingenuous regret. Is it as great a crime to offend God as man? Why then do you object to the gospel, that it *calls sinners to repentance*?—It is implied in religion, that the sinner not only repent, but *be converted*; i. e. that he should have, not merely some temporary regret and pious relentings, but that such feelings should become habitual and permanent;—that an alteration of character should be effected, comprehending a change

in his pursuits, in the objects of his love and aversion.—It is, lastly, implied in religion, that the sinner should immediately “break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by turning to the Lord.” For how long a time should we think it reasonable to allow a state criminal to retain the disposition, which led him secretly to plot, or openly to attempt the subjugation of his country? For how long a time should any rational being have license to remain hostile to virtue, and to the best interests of the universe? If one week, why not a month; if one month, why not a year; if one year, why not forever? Religion, let it be observed, recognises nothing, as conversion, which is not followed by a virtuous life. But how it is possible, that a dishonest man should too suddenly become honest,—that a profligate man should too suddenly become sober and temperate,—and that any sinner should too suddenly become an upright servant of God; is more, far more, than reason will enable us to perceive. The fact is, that religion requires of man no dispositions, or moral qualities, but such as unbiassed reason condemns him for not possessing.

There are two other occasions, on which the difference between virtue and vice, between piety and irreligion, is very apparent. Christian virtue will endure examination. He, whose life evinces such virtue, is nothing disconcerted at being scrutinized by the irreligious. If he is asked why he has respect to all God’s commandments; Why he loves the Saviour; Why he subdues his own passions; and labors, to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of faith; he may be surprised at the question, but can never want a reply. “Jacob shall not now be ashamed; neither shall his face wax pale.” He treads firmly, and finds, that there is no trembling in the ground beneath his feet.—Whereas, the sinner hates nothing so much, as rational examination. He feels himself to be vulnerable at every point. Whenever you make an appeal to his reason, he is perturbed. Knowing, that reason is against him, he dreads her reproachful glare, and angry frown.

In connexion with this I make one further remark. You well know, that, in view of death, sinners often lament their want of religion. Sometimes their anxiety rises to desperation, and cannot be witnessed by others without the most painful emotion. Now, let me ask, did you ever know a christian lamenting, on his dying bed, that he was a christian?—lamenting, that he had made a humble, unreserved surrender of himself to the will and service of his Creator? Among the millions, that have died in christian countries, point me to a single one, who, in death, retracted his christian faith; who regretted, that he had chosen God for his portion, and Christ for his Saviour, and desired recovery, only that he might testify before the world his repentance for the virtue and piety of his past life.—No, the very mention,—the recollection of that covenant, which has been established between God and himself, serves to brighten his countenance, and to soften those shades of death, which hang upon his visage.

IV. From that view, which has been taken of the subject, we perceive, that, without religion, it were better to be any thing, than a rational being. Your reason and conscience, let me remind you, will survive the most durable objects of the material universe. Like these, they will not wax old, nor be impaired by time; nay, the revolutions of eternity will but add to their activity and comprehension. There will be a clearness of perception hitherto unknown. Your relation to God, the nature of human obligation, and the difference between virtue and vice, will be subjects neither of investigation nor cavil. Reason unbiassed will, in every period of duration, and in all parts of the universe, boldly condemn vice, and declare itself on the side of virtue. The friends of holiness will then experience that peace and overflowing joy, which arise from an intimate and near view of its obligation and good desert, and of the unchangeable approbation of its Author. The conflict, on the other side, which is now maintained in sinners, between reason and inclination, between the conscience and the heart, will then

become intolerable, when reason shall have acquired immortal strength, and vice unchangeable dominion. Our Saviour, in describing future punishment, is pleased to speak of "chains and darkness,—a burning lake,—a place prepared for the devil and his angels." How far this language is literal, I pretend not to say. But, we may well conceive, that the suffering of reprobates will be sufficiently great, to justify this language, even if the body should have no share in the pain. Remorse of conscience, we have been reminded, in this discourse, has in the present life, driven persons to desperation. It is impossible to tell how far this remorse may be increased after death, when the organs of moral vision shall become more powerful and discriminating. A consciousness of unworthiness, of turpitude, of folly, and irretrievable loss, will accompany the sinner, in whatever part of the universe,—in whatever part of eternity he may exist. Even if he could escape the eyes of God, there is another immortal enemy, whose upbraidings he can not escape; I mean his own reason and conscience; I mean himself. Fly where he will, his reason goes with him; and its reproaches will always be felt with undiminished sensibility.

Lastly. We cease to be surprised at the great effort, which the gay and thoughtless often make to keep up their spirits;—in their own language, to expel the glooms,—to banish sorrow. These glooms and this sorrow are very likely to be the result of solitary and calm reflection. On such occasions, reason begins to speak, and her voice becomes distinct and audible. The sinner is alarmed; he dreads this assiduous monitor. "I hate him (said Ahab;) for he never prophesies good concerning me, but always evil." Scenes and employments must be devised, in which the passions will be interested, and reflection silenced. But this tumultuous state of the feelings cannot be always preserved, nature herself will not endure it. Nay, reflection may obtrude itself, in the midst of splendid and loud festivity. "In the midst of mirth, the heart is sorrowful: and the

end of that mirth is heaviness." Who could have been less exposed to care and anxious thought; who could have been in a better condition to enjoy a night of revelling, undisturbed, than Belshazzar, when he had "made a feast to a thousand of his lords, and was drinking wine before the thousand; when he sent for the golden vessels, which had been taken from the house of God, and suffered his lords, his wives, and concubines to drink in them. Yet in that same hour, came forth the fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick, upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand, that wrote. And the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote, one against the other."

But, whether conscience can now be silenced or not, the time is coming, when there will be no amusement,—no expedients for effecting this. Its twinges, of which the sinner is so much afraid, are premonitions of something to come. They are the gentlest corrodings of a worm, which never dies; they are scintillations of that fire, which never can be quenched.

My hearers, in order to be secure, we must be christians:—in order to be rational, we must be pious: peace must be restored between the intellects and the heart. We must cease to be our own enemies; to expose ourselves to our own reproaches. "For if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things."

## SERMON VI.

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Consequences of neglecting the great salvation.

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HEBREWS, ii. 2 & 8.

*For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation: which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them, that heard Him.*

KNOWN unto God are all his works from the foundation of the world. He is incapable of disappointment; nor does he ever adopt any new measure by way of experiment. He never enters on the execution of any purpose, which he had not formed, before the universe began. Though to our view, his government has a different aspect at different periods, it is really uniform. The parts, though various, are so connected and proportioned as to constitute a system, in all respects, worthy of the Being, from whom it proceeds. That which happens in any age, has relation to what precedes, and to what follows. The Mosaic dispensation had respect, on the one side, to the fall of man: on the other, to the coming of Jesus Christ. It was not designed to be perfect in quality, nor eternal in duration. "The law made nothing perfect; but was a shadow of good things to come."



The apostle institutes in the context, a comparison between the religion of Moses and that of Christ. "The word, spoken by angels," was the law, as given at Mount Sinai. If it be asked, why the law is said to have been given by angels; I answer, that many of these celestial spirits, there is reason to believe, were present, as witnesses and ministers to that great transaction. This seems to be intimated by the Psalmist, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand; even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai." By the martyr Stephen it is expressly declared, that the Jewish people "received the law by the disposition of angels;" and by St. Paul, that "the law was ordained by angels in the hands of a Mediator." In what manner, their aid was given, we know not; but that they were present, and in some way auxiliary to the great event, is made sufficiently clear by the passages cited.

If this word, thus given, was firm, saith the inspired writer;—if the commands of Moses could not be broken with impunity; and if those, who violated them were, in a very direct and exemplary manner, punished; how shall we escape, if we neglect a religion, introduced by God's own Son, and propagated by the miraculous interposition of the Holy Ghost?

Similar to the text is another passage in the same epistle; "If he that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, with which he was sanctified, an unholy thing?"

It is evident, that the apostle meant to infer, not only that God will be punctual in executing the threatnings of the gospel, because he was so in executing those of the law; but likewise, that the doom of sinners, who reject christianity will be more severe than was theirs, who rejected the religion of Moses, in proportion as christianity has superior excellence.

I shall endeavor to show briefly; 1. That God signally manifested his displeasure against those, who were disobedient

under the ancient dispensation. 2. Consider some particulars, in which it appears, that the new dispensation is greatly superior; And, 3. Enforce the inference, which the apostle makes, viz: that to those, who reject this religion, there is no possibility of escape.

I. It appears, that God signally manifested his displeasure against those, who were disobedient under the ancient dispensation. By the Levitical law, violation of the sabbath was made a capital crime. "Every one that defileth the sabbath, shall surely be put to death:" and when a man was found, gathering sticks on the sabbath, this was immediately executed. "All the congregation," saith God, "shall stone him with stones. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, that he died."

When Achan had concealed some of the devoted spoils of Jericho, though he confessed the deed and its criminality, no favor was shown him. He suffered a public execution; and on this condition "the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger." When Moses came down from the mount, and perceived, that the Israelites were celebrating idolatrous games before the golden calf, he assembled the sons of Levi, and commanded them to inflict immediate death on those, concerned in the wickedness. "Put every man his sword on his side, and go in and out from gate to gate, throughout the camp, and slay every man his neighbor, and every man his brother. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people, that day, about three thousand men." More instances might easily be adduced to show, how severely individuals were punished for contempt of the Mosaic law, and how truly it was said, that they "who despised that law, died without mercy."

If this were true of individuals it was more obviously so of the nation.

From the beginning, a great variety of evils had been threatened the Jews, to deter them from apostacy and rebellion. Whenever idolatry and vice became general, the displeasure of God was displayed, either in prophetic de-

nunciations, or by the infliction of national judgments : and if incorrigibly obdurate, it was threatened, that they should be extirpated from the land of their inheritance, and dispersed over all the earth. This threatening was in due time fulfilled with a degree of exactness, which to the present day, is a matter of notice and astonishment to the whole world. From the manner in which God treated his chosen people, it is evident, that to him can be attributed neither remissness, nor want of veracity. Though long suffering, he was not slack concerning his promise. The obstinacy of the Jews did at length exhaust the forbearance of the Father of mercies. After he had, during the course of many ages, frequently admonished and chastised them, he suffered them to be enslaved, their civil and ecclesiastical government to be dissolved, their city and holy temple to be consumed, their land to be given to strangers, and themselves to be removed into all quarters of the globe. They have become "a proverb, a hissing, and a by-word," and God hath given them "a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind."

Thus we perceive, that "the word spoken by angels, was stedfast,"—that the threatnings, contained in the Jewish law were not ineffectual ;—but that "transgressions and disobedience received a just recompense of reward."

It may be fairly concluded, that the same God, who with so much strictness, punished disobedience under one dispensation, will not, under another, suffer delinquents to escape with impunity.

But this is not all. Between the two dispensations there is great difference. The latter is far more excellent. The particulars of this difference are now in the 2nd place, to be considered. These, it is suggested in the text, are the manner of its being communicated, and nature of the blessings promised.

God was equally the author of both religions. In that respect there was no difference. But one was introduced by angels, and the other by the Son of God : a circumstance,

which is, with much propriety, mentioned, to show what superior regard, the Supreme Being entertained for the christian dispensation; a circumstance, which may be very clearly illustrated by reference to one of our Saviour's parables. The owner of the vineyard is there represented, as letting it out to husbandmen. At the usual season for several years, he sent servants to receive his portion of the fruits. These servants were abused. Presuming, that there were some limits to their audacity, he at last commissioned his son. Now this last measure is mentioned, as the result of far greater condescension, than those which preceded. So the divine good will towards men was more strongly expressed by the sending of Christ, than by the mission of angels.

Another most important article, in which the economy of Jesus Christ surpassed that of Moses, was the nature of that happiness, promised to the obedient. The latter is denominated the *law of a carnal commandment*. Earthly rewards and punishments were the sanctions, by which this law was enforced. If the Jews were obedient, they should eat the good of the land; their neighbors should not invade them; if they did, they should not prevail; their lands should yield large harvests; their flocks and their herds should be multiplied; they should not experience desolating sickness, nor premature death.

On these subjects, christianity says little, or nothing. Jesus Christ has not made himself answerable to his community, for wealth, honors, or worldly influence. His disciples are to be remunerated at the *resurrection of the just*. Their reward is glory, honor, and immortality. Their pleasures will be those of the intellects and the heart: such as none but good beings can enjoy; such as nothing but the presence and favor of God can excite. Had the Jews observed their laws with blameless fidelity, possession of the promised country would, to no individual, have been permanent. To such there would indeed have been many and prosperous days on earth; but exemption from death was not intimated. Christianity, on the other hand, refers all

things to eternity. The believer's laurels shall never wither ; his crown is perpetually brilliant ; his rest is everlasting ; his dwelling is a house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ; his kingdom is that which never can be moved.

Nor can we suppose, that, when speaking of the great salvation, and the superiority of the christian religion to that of Moses, the apostle was unmindful of the atoning death of Christ, obscurely shadowed in the one, but clearly made known in the other. How far some of the more inquisitive and devout Jews understood the ultimate design of their expiatory sacrifices, it is impossible to determine. That they could not, from the Levitical institution, have obtained any clear views on the subject, is certain. When Jesus Christ actually appeared, though the prophetic writings had been added to the law, nothing appears to have been further from the common expectation, than a suffering Redeemer.

But in christianity the sufferings of Christ are every where displayed. "I determined to know nothing among you," said Paul to the Corinthians, "but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. I delivered unto you, first of all," saith he, "that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures."

The christian salvation is great not only in itself, and as to the manner, in which it was procured, but likewise in the manner, in which it is bestowed. The happiness, which it implies, supposes a certain correctness of moral taste :—a character essentially different from that which is common to men. "To as many as receive Christ, to them giveth he power to become the sons of God ; who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Whether we consider christianity in comparison with Judaism, or without such comparison, it is indeed a wonderful religion. Fix your eyes on any individual of our race. He enjoys animal life in common with the various species, by which he is surrounded. Some of them exceed him in years, and many in strength and vigor. Like the rest,

he decays,—his body dissolves, and incorporates with the earth and the air. During life, he is distinguished from other animals by the gift of intellects, which he is very industrious to abuse. He feels, that there is reality in moral obligation; he cannot deny, that there is a fitness and dignity in virtue. He sees the right; he avoids it; and dreads a retribution. Concerning such a creature, mortal, erroneous, and depraved, what favorable expectations, or even conjectures, can reason indulge? “If a man die, shall he live again?” If he live, shall he not be miserable? Can it be imagined, that God will raise the dead to life?—that bodies, which are sown in dishonor, should be raised in glory? Can it be imagined, that for creatures, such as have been described, the Son of God should descend from heaven, to suffer disgrace and mortal agony? Shall they enjoy eternal rewards,—sit down with Christ on his throne, and become kings and priests unto God? What language is this to be applied to a creature, the most feeble and rebellious?—a creature, who deserves to be forsaken of God,—to be punished of God,—to be driven from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power? He is to be raised together with Christ, and to sit together with him in heavenly places!

III. We are now to enforce the expostulation, contained in the text.

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” To render this inquiry the more interesting, it is necessary to determine, whether this negligence be as common, as it is dangerous. If, in christian countries, but one in a large multitude be thus chargeable, almost no individual would think his own danger great.

To any person, judging of this subject, previously to observation, it would appear little less, than certain, that all to whom it was offered, would vie with one another, which should most readily embrace it. One would suppose, that as soon as such salvation were proclaimed, all men would resemble a hungry, famishing crowd, to which was opened a store house, richly furnished with every kind of food. Like

the invalids at the pool of Bethesda, one would expect to see them strive, who should first step in. Instead of which, every age has witnessed a general indifference. From the days of Noah to the present time, all the preachers of righteousness have had occasion to exclaim, in plaintive language, "Lord, who hath believed our report:" and the great God hath condescended to use the words of disappointment and grief: "All day long I have stretched forth my hands to a disobedient and gain saying people."

These examples indeed prove inattention to religion in general, rather than to christianity in particular. But under this latter economy it will be more easy to find those who do, than those, who do not, neglect salvation.

1. This neglect is undeniably chargeable on the openly immoral: on them, who profane the holy and reverend name of God;—on them who desecrate the sacred things, displayed in the bible;—on them, who by impurity defile the temples of the Holy Ghost;—on them, who love to be found among the wicked, and with them to expel reason and drown conscience. To say that such persons neglect the great salvation, does not sufficiently express their feelings on the subject. They view it with sincere aversion. The salvation of saints consists much in the presence of God. "The multitude of them that are saved, shall walk in the light of his countenance, they shall behold his face in righteousness." Would this be heaven to those, of whom we are speaking? Would they, who blaspheme God, readily unite in the devout extacy of those, who exclaim, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty?" Could they be happy with God, who are conscious, that no society is so delightful to them, as that in which God is least regarded, and his laws most daringly violated?

But neglect of salvation does not necessarily imply this unblushing, undissembled vice. Though there is great resemblance between the text and another passage in the same epistle, which we have already quoted, they are not perfectly alike. "If he, that despised Moses' law died without mer-

cy, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God !” Here the sacred writer speaks of marked and violent opposition to the christian religion. But our text does not. It speaks only of neglecting the great salvation :—it speaks of that indifference, that inattention, which, even in christian countries, passes without dishonor or animadversion. It is not, you see, a few great sinners only, whose condition is perilous : it is not they exclusively who have disturbed and astonished the world by daring transgression ; it is not the Cains, the Pharaohs, the Ahabs, and Jezebels alone : it is the statesman, who sacrifices a quiet conscience to his own ambition ; it is the husbandman, who loves his well cultivated acres, more than the heavenly inheritance ; it is the scholar, in whose heart literary fame usurps the place of God : it is that gay young person, whom the world censures for nothing, but too little prudence, and too much good nature ; it is the man of calculation and industry, who can think of no object, beyond the grave, so hideous, as present poverty and so inviting as wealth ;—it is in fine every person, who loves not our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Habitual levity is as truly a mark of reprobation as a course of conduct decidedly immoral ; though the same degree of criminality is not proved in both cases.

Now, if the neglect of salvation is so general, no expostulation can be more interesting and terrific, than that in the text, “ How shall we escape ?” Will you attempt to escape by proving the gospel not true ? What an arduous ; what a daring enterprise ! You must prove that Moses was not a divinely commissioned leader ;—that he wrought no miracles ;—that the law had no relation to the gospel ;—that the ancient prophets, whose predictions are, at this moment, receiving their completion, were not inspired ;—that Jesus of Nazareth was not a teacher, sent from God ;—that he performed no works, which were above human power ;—that his apostles performed none, but were all impiously employed to deceive mankind. Can all this be proved ? Can you even persuade yourselves, that the



book, which we call *Holy Scriptures*, had no divine origin, and that nothing is to be feared from its threatenings? No; you do not, in this way, even hope to escape. The awful majesty of the Bible terrifies you.

If you dare not deny christianity you will perhaps become its panegyrist. It is, you say, a noble, a sublime, a benevolent religion. It was announced to our first progenitors. All nations were governed in subserviency to it. It was introduced by a divine Saviour, and propagated by miraculous power. It declares, that God is love; it proclaims peace on earth and good will towards men. In the eternal blessings of such a religion, the whole human family, you believe, will finally partake.

So did not reason the author of our text. From the same premises, he drew a precisely opposite conclusion. He did not say, the salvation of the gospel is a great salvation; therefore it will embrace all: but how shall they escape who neglect it? The emotions, excited by contemplating the sublimity, the magnitude, and the benign nature of the christian religion, must be joyful, or otherwise, according to the light, in which it is viewed. In the obedient believer, it produces joy; in the awakened sinner, it excites hope; but to the determined transgressor, it speaks no language, but that of terror. It is a benevolent religion; it will, in this quality, never be exceeded by any other; therefore, they, who are not reclaimed by it, must perish. It is a benevolent religion; and therefore, all they, who reject it, must suffer an aggravated punishment.

The reasoning of the ancient Jews was similar to that, which we endeavor to confute. They believed, that the children of Abraham, after having experienced so great mercies, would never be abandoned. On the same principle, as that of our text, God said to them, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities." On the same principle will Tyre and Sidon be punished with less severity, in the day of judgment, than those cities, where Christ preached and exerted his divine power.

Let us consider, therefore, whether we can endure to perish in that wonderful manner; in which it is declared, that the despisers of the gospel shall perish. How hard it is to endure intense pain for a single week! How slowly passes the time! How exceedingly long appears every day! But the oracles of God set forth the punishment of impenitent sinners as being exceedingly severe, in its degree. The strongest language, the most frightful imagery is used to describe it. These descriptions are familiar to us. The profane use the language of these descriptions contemptuously. But even they cannot deliberately consider it without terror. It is not in man to anticipate, without emotion, interminable ages of weeping, wailing, darkness and despair. Yet it is told us by a *God of truth*, and even by a *God of mercy*, that such will be the doom of the ungodly. Let us bring this matter home to ourselves. These declarations are not the less true, nor the less interesting, because they were made many hundred years ago. They are now made to us as really, as they were to those, who first heard them, and who beheld our Saviour's gesture, visage and divine majesty, when they were uttered.

To give additional solemnity to these considerations, let it be remembered, that ours will be no common punishment should we die in our sins. We shall be distinguished among reprobates:—distinguished by an unusual load of infamy and pain. Consider for a few moments: How early was divine truth poured in upon our minds! how early were we taught the first principles of the gospel! How many events took place in youth, calculated to arrest the attention, and which, perhaps, for a while really did this! With what increasing clearness, did we, in after years, perceive the necessity of religion! With what solemn language has the Bible warned us! With what tender, affecting, penetrating expressions has it addressed us, that we might be melted, allured, and persuaded! In what a glaring light have the sacred writers displayed the world of spirits! How has conscience remonstrated, and the Holy Spirit reproved

and excited us ! All these things will be brought to view at the day of judgment, and will be the subjects of perpetual self reproach. " How then shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ? " But there is now a season for escaping : not if we persevere in sin ; not if we reject the counsel of God against ourselves ; but if we repent of sin, and submit to the gospel. Without this, the question through eternity, will be, not " how shall we escape ? " but how shall we endure ? " Who can dwell with devouring fire ? Who can inhabit everlasting burnings ? " May God of his infinite grace, deliver us from making the inquiry, in the regions of woe.









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